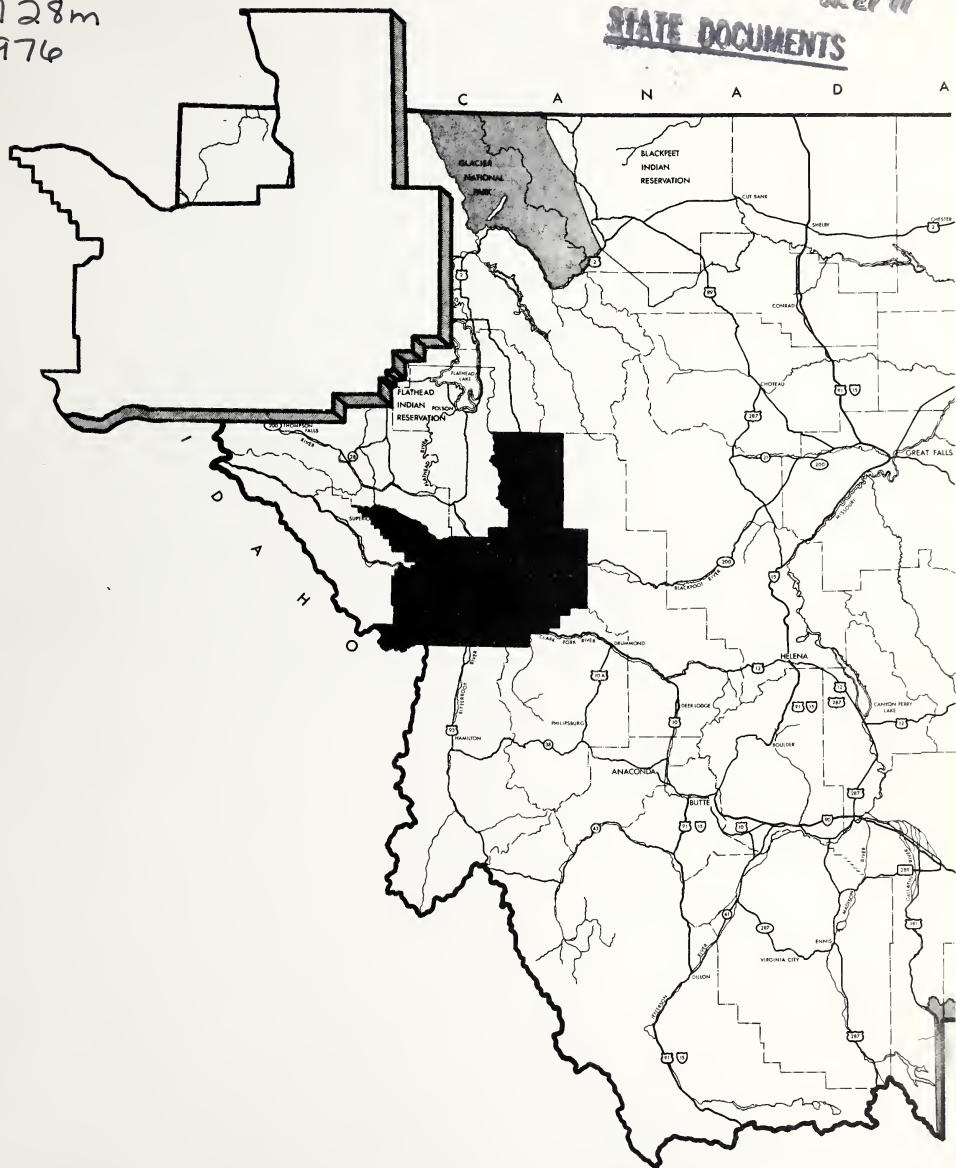


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MISSOULA COUNTY PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

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MISSOULA COUNTY PARKS,
RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
NEEDS - POLICIES - RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepared By:

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August 1976

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INTRODUCTION

The aesthetic appeal of Missoula County is evident to the residents of the area and to our visitors as well. Most County residents would agree that the visual and open space character of our river valleys and bordering mountains are major factors in the choice of life style and locational preferences. Yet, few are personally involved with, or concerned about, subtle changes that are constantly modifying their environment and way of life. A common attitude is to leave critical decisions concerning recreation opportunities and landscape modifications to federal and state agencies, or to private land owners whose principal concerns may relate to other values and land uses. This dependence on agencies that are physically or administratively removed from local needs and problems has resulted in an incomplete, unbalanced recreation and open space system in Missoula County.

Certain types of recreation programs have fared better than others. For example, those living within the City limits of Missoula have benefited from a well-developed system of City parks. Natural resource-oriented areas which include camping, fishing, hunting access, and back country have been the primary focus of state and federal programs. On the other hand, regional parks and district parks that provide opportunities for day use within 50 miles of major segments of the County population have largely fallen between the rungs of administrative responsibility. Also, County residents living within the Missoula urban area have not enjoyed the same level of recreation services as those living within the City limits.

Heretofore an in-depth systematic evaluation of recreation opportunities and needs had not been prepared for Missoula County. The State Outdoor Recreation

Plan (1)* prepared by the Montana Department of Fish and Game conducted a superficial review of the recreation programs in Missoula County as part of State Planning Region 11. The comprehensive plan for the County also addresses, in broad terms, some needs and objectives of a recreation and open space system, as identified by various citizen groups. This plan examines in detail recreation policies, programs and needs, and explores ways of satisfying deficiencies.

The recreation and open space plan has two principal elements: the overview plan and the plan of development. The overview plan identifies present and future needs and recommends policies, programs and priorities. Working within the framework of the overview plan, the plan of development will identify specific sites that should be incorporated into the recreation system along with relevant types of development. In addition to this summary report, several detailed study reports have been prepared. These include: No. 1 - Framework for Planning (2), No. 2 - The People and Their Patterns of Use (3), No. 3 - Resources and Facilities (4), and No. 4 - Needs and Proposed Developments (5).

The purpose of the recreation and open space plan is to:

1. Record existing recreation areas and facilities and evaluate the opportunities and services they provide for specific clientele groups.
2. Determine present and future needs for indoor and outdoor recreation areas and facilities.
3. Identify for preservation those critical natural resource areas, historic sites and open space lands that contribute significantly to the aesthetic, cultural and physical character of the area.

*References cited on page 69.

4. Design a comprehensive, orderly, efficient, and achievable system of parks and open spaces to serve all City and County residents.
5. Recommend policies, programs, priorities, and administrative arrangements for the implementation of the plan.

SCOPE

The Recreation and Open Space Plan operates within the framework of the Missoula County and Urban Comprehensive Plan (6,7). It deals with recreation and open space in its broadest context. The recreation element of the plan discusses indoor, as well as outdoor, recreation opportunities evaluated in terms of a comprehensive recreation system. The plan is concerned with both rural and urban recreational developments, and the services they provide to individual neighborhoods and to the County population in aggregate. The intent is not to develop or duplicate a City park plan, but to deal with recreation on a comprehensive basis, thereby accounting for public use which overlaps political boundaries. Likewise, federal and state recreation programs were reviewed in terms of how they contribute to, or fail to satisfy, the recreation needs of Missoula County residents.

The primary focus of this plan is to identify the County's role in providing recreation opportunities. It delineates recreation needs that should be satisfied by County-administered programs. The plan also indicates specific sites and resource areas that should be developed and managed by the County. In addition, the plan recommends policies and administration guidelines to give direction to the proposed County recreation program.

During the planning process, existing programs and agency roles were recognized.

The efforts of the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, the Montana Departments of Fish and Game, and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation provide significant opportunities for wildland use, dispersed recreation and overnight camping. Likewise, the Missoula City Parks Department and various commercial establishments offer important and unique opportunities. These efforts are providing outstanding opportunities to County residents and they should continue.

Rather than competing with on-going programs, the County programs will emphasize segments of the recreation spectrum that other agencies are not presently satisfying. These include developed parks in the urban fringe surrounding Missoula's City limits, and easily accessible day use facilities. Also, parks in small towns, river corridors and open space management are areas of concern for the County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the recreation and open space program are coordinated with, and are an expansion of, those included in the County and Urban Comprehensive Plans. Specific items have been identified by citizen groups as part of the comprehensive planning process. They provide a framework within which recreation and open space programs and policies can evolve and be evaluated.

The objectives of the recreation program are to:

- Provide a full range of indoor and outdoor recreation programs and facilities to meet to the extent possible the present and future needs, desires and expectations of all residents of the County.
- Design acquisition, development and management programs based on identified needs.

- Provide the highest quality recreational opportunities attainable in keeping with practical, financial and natural resource limitations.
- Establish parks in each local neighborhood where none exist, and improve those which are inadequate.
- Endorse and encourage the concept of community centers and school-park developments.
- Develop a system of recreational trails and bikeways that link parks, schools, residential areas, and commercial areas.
- Provide access for the recreational use of rivers, lakes and streams, while protecting environmental quality and private property rights.
- Identify for preservation those areas that are of historic and archaeological significance.
- Encourage the establishment of private and quasi-public facilities, especially developments that are self-supporting.
- Design facilities and manage areas to minimize conflicts between recreation user groups and between recreation and other land uses.

The need to identify and preserve Missoula's physical environment and natural beauty are recognized as crucial to the perpetuation and enhancement of the quality of life. The objectives in delineating an open space system are:

- Protect all rivers and streams, especially the Clark Fork, Bitterroot and Blackfoot Rivers, and the Rattlesnake, Pattee, Grant, and Marshall Creeks, in their natural states.
- Restore and preserve the natural beauty of waterfronts and bottom-land areas along rivers, lakes and streams.
- Identify recreational uses and values for natural resource lands that are compatible with environmental goals and other land uses.
- Provide natural areas for nature study, biological research and wildlife sanctuaries with limited public access and use.
- Preserve the unique natural features which lend aesthetic character to urban and rural settings.
- Establish and preserve open space through zoning, acquisition, easements, grants, donations, and other available means to prevent undesirable land uses in critical areas.

POPULATION

The population of Missoula County has more than doubled since 1940, and the 1975 population was estimated to be 65,000. County population is expected to almost double again in the next 30 years, increasing to 72,561 by 1980, and to 106,652 by 2000. This represents 24 percent and 83 percent increases for 1980 and 2000 respectively. The population distribution for the six County census divisions is indicated in Table 1, along with projections for 1980, 1990 and 2000.

Table 1

COUNTY CENSUS DIVISIONS		POPULATION					
			² Bonner Clinton Division	⁴ French- town Evato	⁵ Lolo Division	⁶ Missoula Division	^{1&3} Seeley Lake- Blackfoot Valley & Missoula Division
Year		Missoula County					
1970		58,263	2,531	1,547	1,747	50,669	1,769
1980		72,561	3,146	1,908	2,153	63,197	2,157
1990		89,181	3,881	2,354	2,642	77,658	2,645
2000		106,652	4,694	2,827	3,169	92,729	3,233

Source: Missoula County Comprehensive Plan (6).

In 1970, the City of Missoula had 29,435 people, which accounted for about 50 percent of the County population. The City population has not kept pace with County population because of the rapid increases in the adjacent urbanized area. The urbanized area had 50,669 people in 1970, representing 87 percent of the County population. The urban population is expected to increase to 92,729 by 2000.

For the purposes of this study, the County census divisions were used as planning units. This breakdown provides the most versatile delineation for recreation planning as it emphasizes population concentrations and to a lesser extent recreation service areas. The Missoula urban area was further divided into neighborhoods based on common interests and problems, elementary school boundaries and availability of statistical information (Figure 1). This detailed evaluation facilitates designing future developments to meet the specific needs of individual neighborhoods. Neighborhood populations are also shown in Figure 1.

PATTERNS OF RECREATION USE

Residents of Region 11 (Missoula, Mineral, Ravalli, and Sanders Counties) indicate that driving for pleasure is the most popular outdoor activity, accounting for 16 percent of all time spent in outdoor recreation pursuits. The second most popular activity is walking for pleasure, accounting for 11 percent of all engagements, with sightseeing a close third. Fishing, the most popular water-oriented activity, is fourth, followed by playing outdoor games and sports, bicycling, back country touring, and picnicking. An analysis of 19 activities relative to total recreation use is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1

POPULATION OF URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

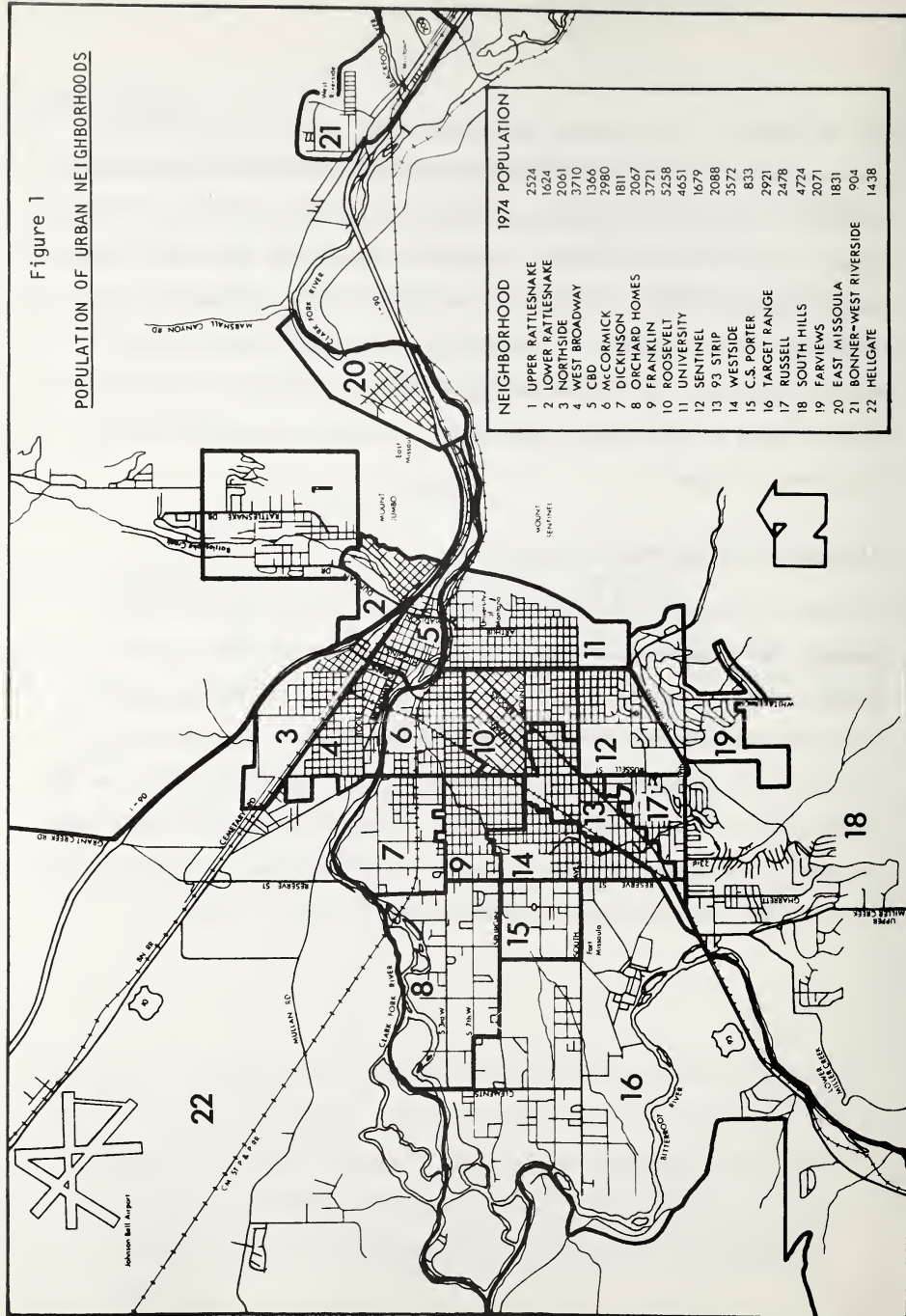
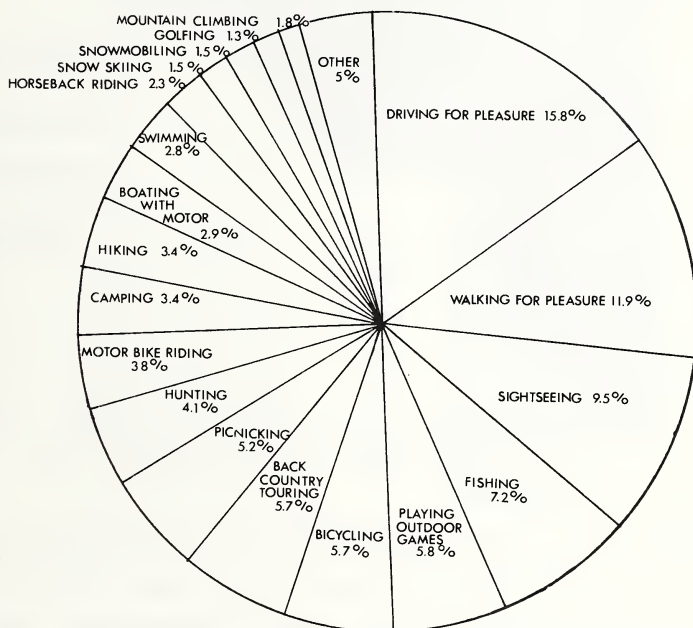


Figure 2

PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED OUTDOOR RECREATION (Yearly Average for Region 11)
(Percent of total engagements)



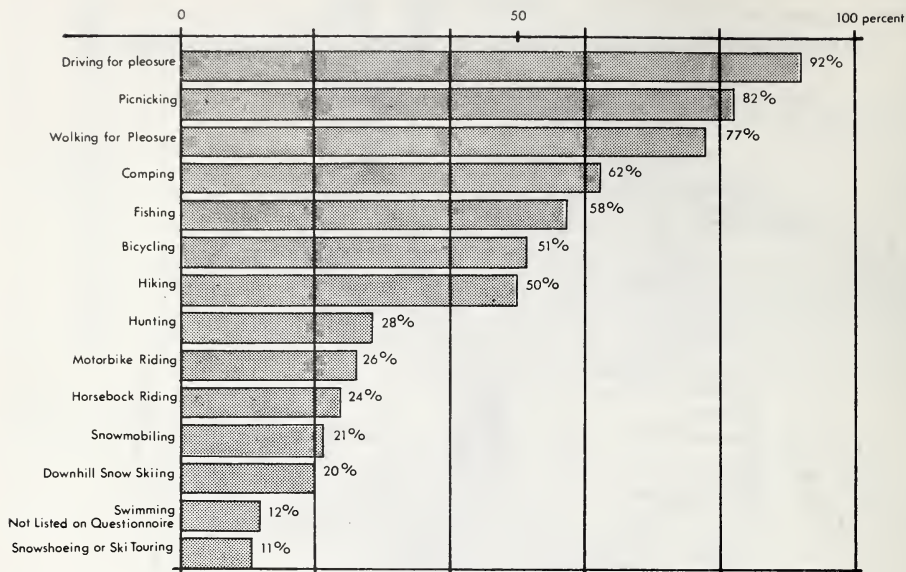
Source: Montana Outdoor Recreation Plan (9).

A telephone survey conducted in 1971 collected information on the overall use patterns and preferences of Missoula residents (10). Over half of the respondents participated in at least 7 of the 14 activities in the 12-month period preceding the study (Figure 3). Driving for pleasure, picnicking and walking for pleasure were the most popular activities, followed by camping, fishing, bicycling, and hiking. Although swimming was not specifically named by the interviewer, the number of times it was spontaneously mentioned by the respondents indicates a high level of participation relative to activities specified.

PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE MISSOULA AREA FOR 1971

(Percent of population participating)

Figure 3



Source: User Preference for Outdoor Recreation (10).

A 1974 survey of urban residents (11) reported that 46 percent of the respondents expressed a need for additional neighborhood facilities (Figure 4). Most respondents also indicated a need for more community park facilities, particularly tennis courts, swimming pools, ice skating rinks, picnic areas, and community gardens, and slightly more than half stated that fishing ponds, bandshells and golf courses were needed.

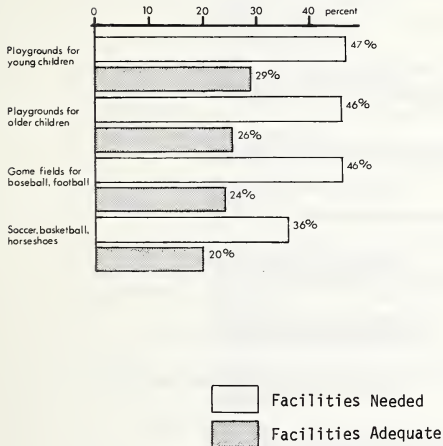
Sixty-seven percent of the respondents expressed a need for more community indoor recreation opportunities. The facilities most frequently mentioned include swimming pools, ice skating rinks, gymnasiums, handball courts, and youth centers. Considerable variation was noted in the desire for various indoor facilities designed for specific age groups (Figure 4). The survey also showed that 70 percent of the respondents favored the use of school gyms and playgrounds to help meet community recreation needs.

Figure 4

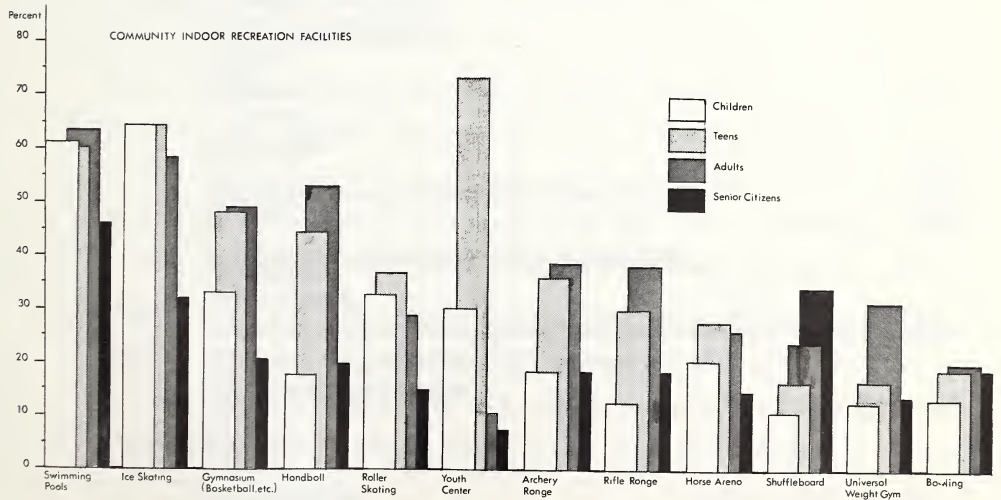
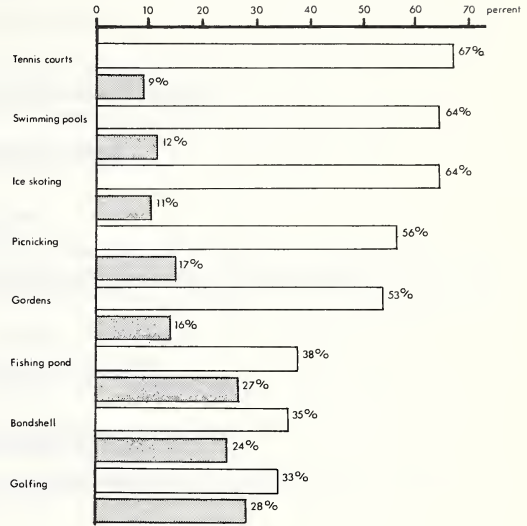
PERCEIVED NEEDS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, COMMUNITY PARKS AND INDOOR FACILITIES

MISSOULA URBAN AREA

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK FACILITIES



COMMUNITY PARK FACILITIES



Source: Missoula Planning Board Survey of Urban Residents (8).

Sixty-nine percent of the urban respondents expressed a need for a system of County-maintained parks, and 81 percent thought that a bikeway system was needed in the Missoula area. Over 90 percent also stated that lands along certain rivers and streams should be protected from development. Other areas that should be protected from development include key wildlife areas, watershed areas, highly erodible soils, and steep slopes.

A similar survey conducted for non-urban segments of the County (12) indicated perceived needs for community and neighborhood recreation facilities (Figure 5). The survey provides an indication of community interest in and support for recreation development proposals. For example, Greenough residents expressed an interest in a community hall. Frenchtown residents, on the other hand, indicated a preference for developed parks.

Response from non-urban County residents varies from those of urban residents on certain recreation and open space issues. A large percentage (72 percent) of non-urban respondents stated that existing state and federal lands provided adequate facilities for their recreation needs, they considered public access to rivers and streams adequate (71 percent) and they indicated that additional County parks created by the subdivision process were not needed (62 percent). County respondents, on the other hand, agreed with urban dwellers on the need to control land development. Approximately 70 percent favored development controls on land along streams and rivers, on steep slopes and highly erodible soils, in critical wildlife areas, and in groundwater recharge areas. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents in the survey would also accept land use controls to protect agricultural land uses, and 68 percent favored controls to promote orderly growth.

PERCEIVED NEEDS FOR RECREATION FACILITIES IN RURAL AREAS

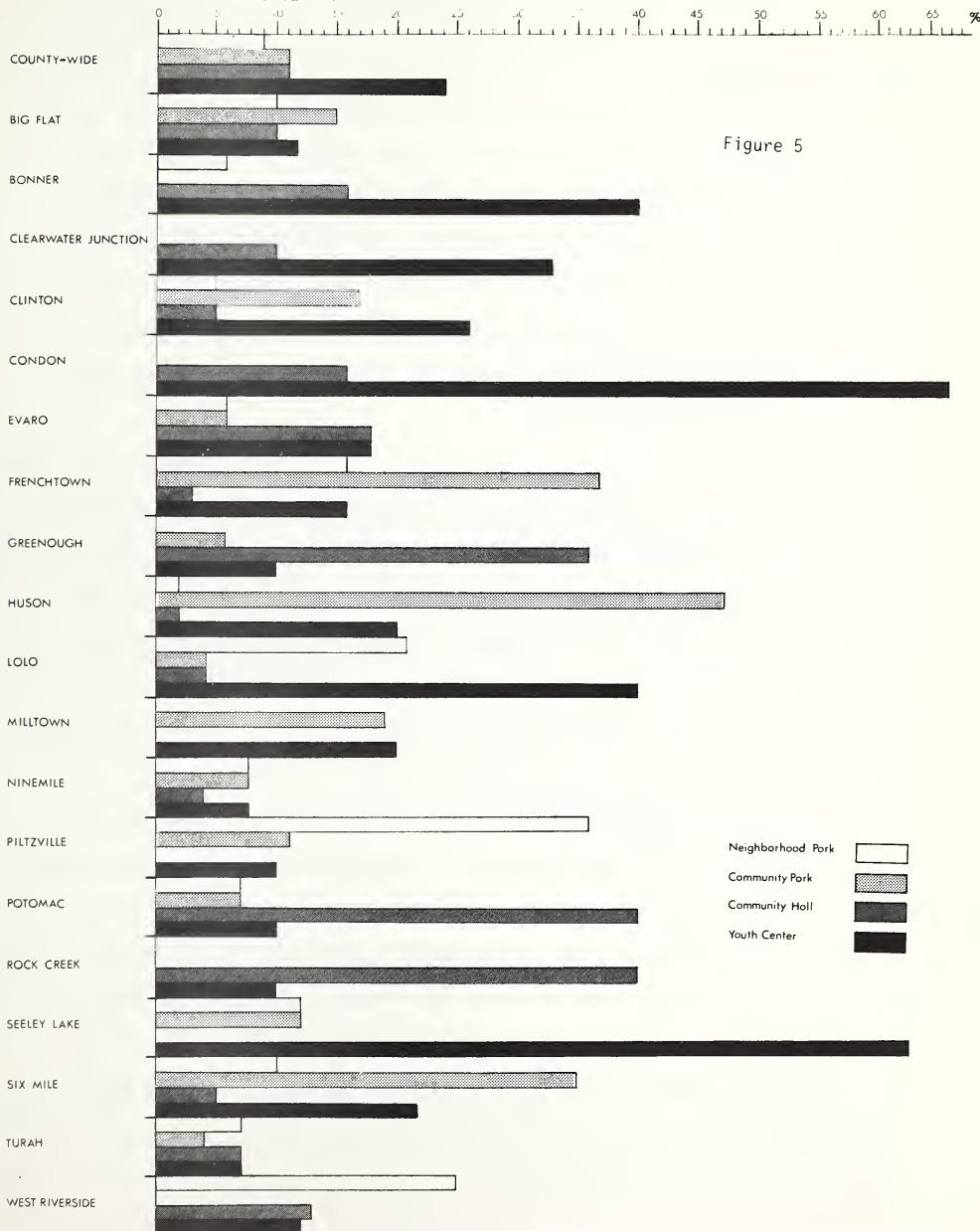


Figure 5

Source: Missoula Planning Board Survey of County Residents

THE RESOURCES

DESCRIPTION OF AREA

Missoula County has 2,625 square miles, of which 11 square miles is water surface. The topography is quite mountainous, with elevations ranging from 2,961 feet to 9,075 feet. The County has three major rivers - the Clark Fork, the Bitterroot and the Blackfoot - all of which contain large populations of trout. Numerous tributary streams throughout the County, such as Rock Creek, also support high-quality fisheries.

There are 12 lakes in Missoula County over 200 acres in size, namely Placid, Seeley, Salmon, Lindbergh, Holland, Milltown (reservoir), Grey Wolf, Alva, Inez, High Park, Elk, and Turquoise Lakes. Another 36 lakes between 20 and 200 acres in size contribute to the total of 8,320 acres of surface water. More than half of these lakes are in alpine areas and are accessible only by trail. Most of the lakes in the County support high-quality fishing resources.

Landscape features are major determinants of the type and amount of recreation that various parcels of land can provide. Topography, vegetation, slope, and water not only dictate the availability of recreation opportunities, but they also limit or enhance visual and perceptual qualities which closely relate to values derived from recreation experiences. Typical landscapes in Missoula County are grassland-river valleys, grass-parkland hills, steep grass-parkland, forested hills and valleys, steep forested mountains, and alpine lands.

Most recreation use takes place on developed sites along river valleys and on nearby lower elevations. Forested areas are preferred for park development, although variety in vegetation and relief adds interest to recreation areas. Steep topography and alpine areas are generally limited to wilderness use and back country activities, i.e., hunting, back-packing and off-road vehicle use. These higher landscapes are also significant for their visual qualities in that they provide a scenic backdrop for both residential areas and recreation sites. Major outdoor recreation resources are shown in Figure 6.

OPEN SPACE LANDS

Missoula County is generously endowed with open space lands. Public lands and areas unsuitable for development include much of the surface acreage in the County. These areas coupled with agricultural lands and visual resource lands constitute an open space system with few rivals in the country.

The open space system has four components: public lands, visual resource lands, conservation reserves, and deferred development areas. In many instances, lands are classified under several categories. Visual resource lands and conservation reserves often overlap areas of public ownership. Also, lands with high visual qualities are frequently unsuitable for development. This overlapping classification aids in the identification of critical areas of immediate concern during plan implementation.

Public lands are the cornerstone of Missoula County's permanent open space system. Federal, State and County agencies own 1,259 square miles, or 48 percent, of the total land area. Large corporate ownerships and Flathead Reservation

Figure 6

RECREATION RESOURCES

MISSOULA COUNTY
MONTANA



lands contribute an additional 30 percent, as compared to 22 percent for private individuals and small corporate ownerships. These lands are mostly in rough mountainous areas and are not available or suitable for the types of development which would consume open space. Most large corporate and reservation land also is unsuited for development and, in fact, intermingles with public property in a checkerboard pattern. In aggregate, public lands and large corporate holdings would combine 78 percent of the County's 2,625 square miles into a relatively permanent open space system.

Visual resource lands create a setting that enhances the quality of life and increases the value of recreation experiences. Visual resources were analyzed in terms of recreation landscapes, types of views and areas seen from travel corridors and population centers. Visual character and quality are determined by the natural features of the land, such as slope, topography, water, and vegetation. Because they are viewed by the most people for the longest period of time, areas seen from Missoula or from travel corridors are most significant as visual resources (Figure 7).

Conservation reserves, or lands with severe limitations for development, should be classified as permanent open space. Floodplains, steep topography, unstable soils, and critical wildlife habitat limit suitability for development (6). These areas largely fall within the open and resource land classification (C-A1) under the proposed County Zoning Regulations which permit a residential density of one dwelling per 40 acres (13). An array of natural resource uses is permitted under this zoning classification. Other lands that should also be classed as permanent open space include natural areas, municipal watersheds, wilderness, and unroaded back country.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Figure 7

VIEW TYPES

-  Ponoramic
-  Valley-enclosed
-  Forest-enclosed
-  Feature

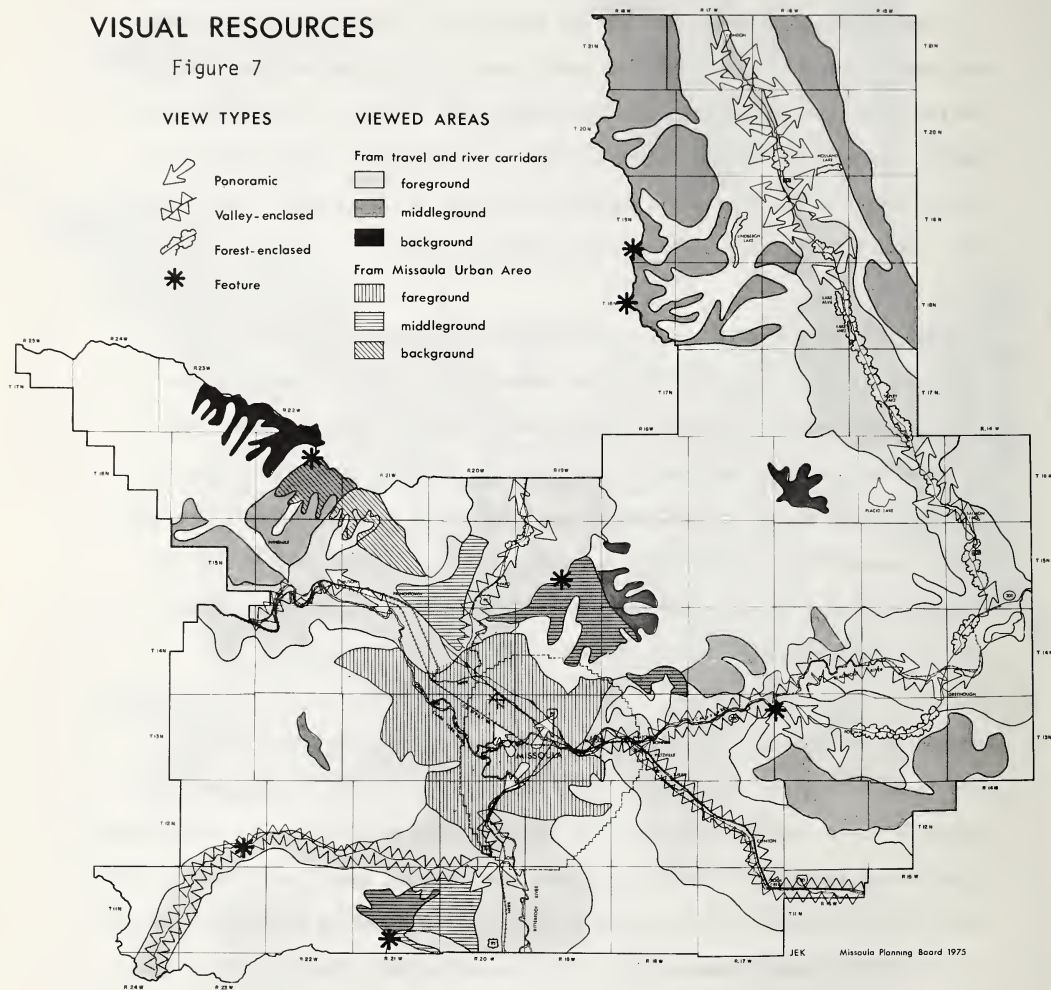
VIEWED AREAS

From travel and river corridors

-  foreground
-  middleground
-  background

From Missaula Urban Area

-  foregroud
-  middleground
-  background



The deferred development class recognizes present open space values on lands with future development possibilities. Rather than permanent controls, emphasis is on holding actions that will defer development decisions until future needs are apparent. Included in this classification are lands having moderate limitations for development, agricultural lands and lands not currently needed for development.

Implementing open space recommendations is not feasible within the limited scope of recreation planning. An open space program should instead be an integral element of the comprehensive planning process concerned with all uses of land. In that context, a broad array of land-use management techniques can be used where applicable, including public ownership, easements, zoning, and use agreements. In some cases recreation funds may be used on specific sites and in other instances open space objectives can be accomplished by proper land management.

URBAN OPEN SPACE

Open space problems within the urbanized area are unique and warrant special consideration. Public lands, visual resource areas and conservation reserve lands serve as a scenic backdrop to the urban area. The impacts of Mt. Sentinel, Rattlesnake Watershed, Blue Mountain, and Pattee Canyon cannot be overemphasized in describing the life style of Missoula residents. Floodplains, steep topography, unstable soils, and wet lands are important elements of the urban open space system that should be protected from development. Other sites that should be classed as open space include park lands, utility corridors, airport lands, railroad rights-of-way, and irrigation ditches. Missoula's open space system is shown on Figure 8.

The mountain fringe, valley corridors and certain resource areas are critical open space lands. Mt. Sentinel, Mt. Jumbo, Waterworks Hill, Blue Mountain, Hellgate Canyon, Pattee Canyon, and McCauley Butte are visually significant and should be protected. The Clark Fork, Blackfoot, Clearwater, and Bitterroot River corridors are also highly significant elements of the open space system. Other areas with unique natural resource values are the Rattlesnake watershed, Blue Mountain and the Fort Missoula Timber Reserve. Their close proximity to Missoula makes them especially important for day use activities.

DEVELOPED PARKS

Even though Missoula County residents place major emphasis on unstructured back country recreation, large amounts of recreational use still occurs on developed sites. These areas are usually more accessible, they can accommodate more people and they offer a greater choice of activities. Generally, developed parks are more urban-oriented and opportunities that depend upon constructed facilities. Most use of this type would be accommodated in regional, district, community, and neighborhood parks. Indoor facilities are also discussed in this section.

Regional Parks

A regional park should offer outdoor recreation opportunities in a natural setting. Vegetative and topographic variety, spaciousness and uniqueness are important qualities for parks in this class. Regional parks should contain at least 500 acres, although smaller sites can be classified as regional parks if there are adequate controls on the development and management of adjacent lands. Enough land should be included within the park boundary to permit audio-visual separation of facilities.

Two distinct types of regional parks are identifiable - sites designed primarily for day use and those offering overnight accommodations. Both types should serve a multi-county area or a major metropolitan region. Parks emphasizing day use should be within a one-hour drive (50 miles) of population centers, while parks catering to overnight or extended visits should be within a three-hour drive (150 miles). Twenty acres per thousand population is considered adequate to satisfy regional park needs.

Few, if any, single recreational developments in western Montana conform to the conceptual model of a regional park. However, a number of sites centered around a single resource could be viewed as a regional park complex. Canyon Ferry Recreation Area is an example of such a complex in which individual campgrounds are clustered around a reservoir. The size of the area and the number and diversity of facilities surrounding the lake collectively attract users from several counties. Seeley, Salmon, Placid, Alva, and Inez Lakes in the Clearwater River drainage could be viewed as a recreation complex of regional significance. Existing federal, state and private recreation sites are shown in Figure 9, along with a tabulation of areas and facilities in Table 2.

District Parks

A district park should provide intensive developments for day use within a natural environment. It should be within a 15-minute drive of most residents of an urban center of 50,000 or more people. Only Missoula has the population base to support a park in this class. According to the standards, five acres per 1,000 population is considered adequate. The district park should be 100 acres or more, although 300 acres is desirable, depending upon the facilities it contains. For example, 150 to 180 acres are needed for an 18-hole golf course, so a district park that contains golfing must be adjusted accordingly.

Figure 9

FEDERAL, STATE AND PRIVATE
RECREATION SITES

LEGEND

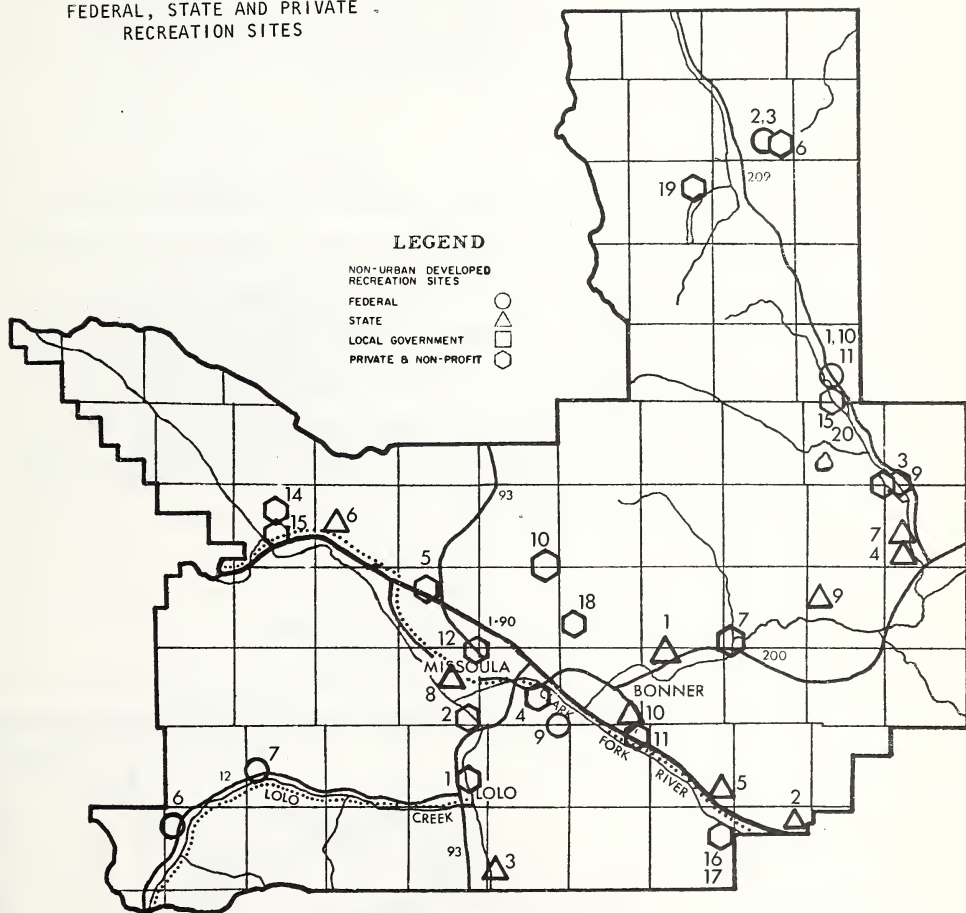
NON-URBAN DEVELOPED
RECREATION SITES

FEDERAL

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PRIVATE & NON-PROFIT



No areas in this category are currently available to Missoula residents.

Pattee Canyon Picnic area, Fort Missoula Park and Blue Mountain all contain elements of a district park (Figure 10). Montana Power Park in the Rattlesnake area at one time served a limited district park function before it was vandalised and closed.

Fort Missoula offers the best opportunity in Missoula for creating a district park. Developments that are proposed or are currently underway include playground and playfield facilities, a golf course and a historic park. These enclaves of development should be integrated into a district park which utilizes common access, parking and service facilities. Other facilities such as picnicking, nature study trails and water-oriented activities should be added. The possibility also exists to jointly develop indoor sport facilities as part of the proposed Fort Missoula High School.

Figure 10

PROPOSED FORT MISSOULA DISTRICT PARK

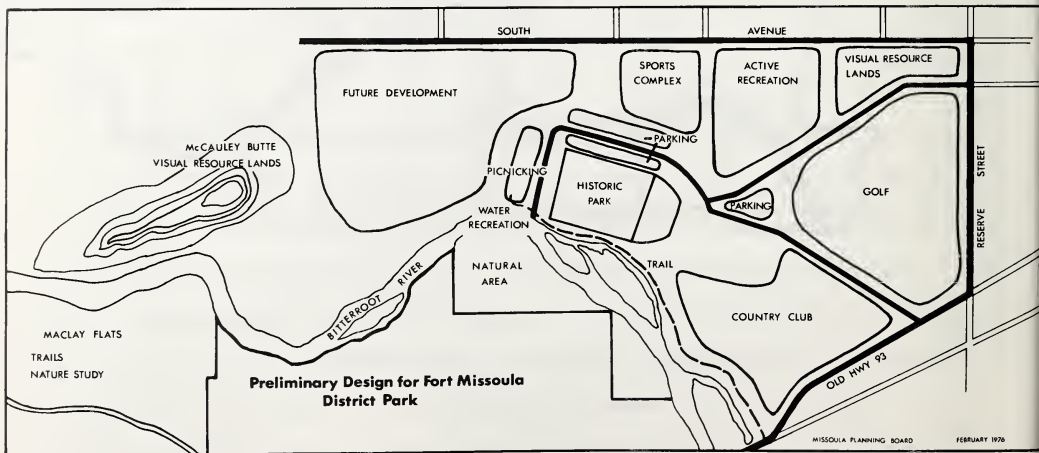


Table 2

NON-URBAN RECREATION SITES
MISSOULA COUNTY

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PICNIC UNITS</u>	<u>CAMPING UNITS</u>	<u>OTHER FACILITIES*</u>
<u>I. Federal Ownership</u>			
1. Big Larch	21	50	S,F,B
2. Holland Creek	0	2	F
3. Holland Lake	0	41	S,F,B
4. Lake Alva	0	2	F
5. Lake Inez	0	2	F,B
6. Lee Creek	0	22	F
7. Lewis and Clark	6	17	F
8. Lindbergh	0	4	S,F,B
9. Pattee Canyon Area Picnic	91	0	
10. River Point	8	26	S,F
11. Seeley Lake	9	32	S,F,B
<u>II. State Ownership</u>			
1. Angeline Rest Area	5	0	F
2. Beavertail Hill S.R.A.	10	15	F
3. Chief Looking Glass F.A.S.	10	14	F,B
4. Clearwater Crossing F.A.S.	3	3	F
5. Clinton Rest Area	5	0	
6. Frenchtown Pond F.A.S.	20	20	S,F
7. Harper Lake F.A.S.	3	10	F
8. Kelly Island F.A.S.	0	0	F
9. Ninemile Prairie F.A.S.	0	4	F
10. Turah F.A.S.	0	18	F,B
<u>III. Local Government Ownership</u>			
None			
<u>IV. Private and Non-Profit</u>			
1. A B & C Trailer Park	0	8	
2. Blue Mountain Trailer Court	0	16	H
3. Campfire Girls Lodge		X	S,F
4. Hellgate Overnight Camp		X	F
5. Hellgate Trailer Park		X	
6. Holland Lake Lodge		X	S,F,B
7. Johnsrud Park	X		F
8. Lake Inez Camp		X	S,F,B
9. Lake Inez Lodge		X	S,F,B
10. Marshall Mountain			SS
11. Mike's Conoco Campground		X	
12. Mobile City Trailer Court		X	
13. Ninemile Conoco		X	
14. Ninemile House	X	8	F,H
15. Pleasure Land Campsites		X	
16. Rock Creek State Station		X	S,F
17. Rock Creek Trailer Court		X	S,F
18. Snow Bowl		X	SS
19. Swan Valley KOA	0	24	B,S
20. Seeley Lake Ranch	0	32	F,H,S

*S-Summary, F-Fishing, B-Boating, H-Hiking, SS-Snow Sports

Community Parks

This activity-oriented park should be within three miles, or approximately a 15-minute bicycle ride, of several urban neighborhoods. A community park should have about 50 acres developed in conjunction with a school wherever possible. Indoor swimming pools and sports centers can enhance the outdoor activities of a community park as they cater largely to the same clientele groups.

Missoula has three community parks: Playfair, McCormick and Greenough Parks. Only Playfair and McCormick Parks conform to the conventional concept of a community park. Greenough Park enhances the recreation system by providing opportunities for quiet-passive recreation activities which are not normally available in active-play areas. Figure 11 indicates the location and service area for existing community parks.

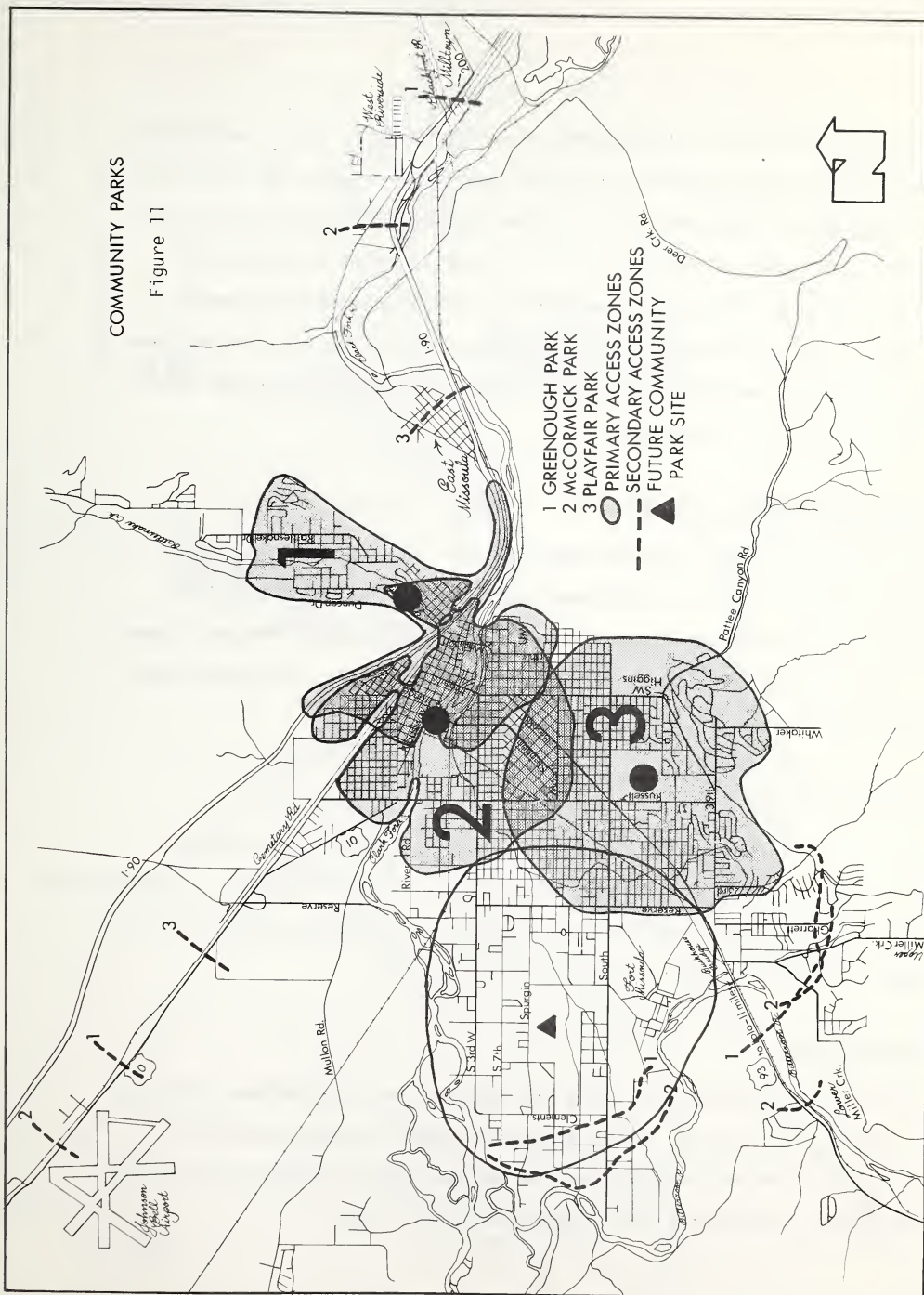
Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the basic building blocks for the recreation system, and are from some aspects the most important park areas. Neighborhood parks, along with local schools, are focal points for neighborhood activities. They are crucial elements of a locally-oriented, public service system, and they furnish the most basic types of recreation experiences for local residents.

Neighborhood parks should provide facilities for both active and passive recreation for all age groups within easy walking distance of urban neighborhoods (1600 to 6400 people). They should be within a 15-minute walk, or 1/2-mile distance, of most residents and should be developed in conjunction with schools whenever possible. A neighborhood park should be 4 to 16 acres with an 8-acre site preferred.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Figure 11



Missoula currently has 13 neighborhood parks, totaling 35 acres. Neighborhood parks have not been provided for most residents living beyond the City limits. A few sites have been developed by citizen groups with revenues derived from Special Improvement Districts (S.I.D.'s). However, no efforts have been made to systematically provide neighborhood parks on an urban-wide basis. Figure 12 shows existing neighborhood parks in relation to the 22 neighborhoods. Also shown are time and distance zones for developed sites which describe the practical limits of user access.

INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

The analysis of indoor recreation opportunities includes facilities that are available to all or a significant portion of the general public (12). Facilities where use was limited by membership, religious affiliation, payment of fees, or other means were also included in the analysis. Available indoor recreation facilities are summarized in Table 3.

SPECIAL USE AREAS

These areas are managed for specific purposes that often include major or limited opportunities for recreation use. This includes historical and archeological sites, natural areas, roadside parks, fairgrounds, and view parks. Only areas with significant recreation values are discussed here.

HISTORIC SITES

Traveler's Rest and the Lolo Trail have been designated as National Historic Landmarks. A third area, Garnet Historic District, has been nominated for inclusion on the National Register. The Montana Historic Preservation Plan (14) recognizes 13 additional sites in Missoula County, namely:

Figure 12
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

1 LINCOLN
SERVICE AREA

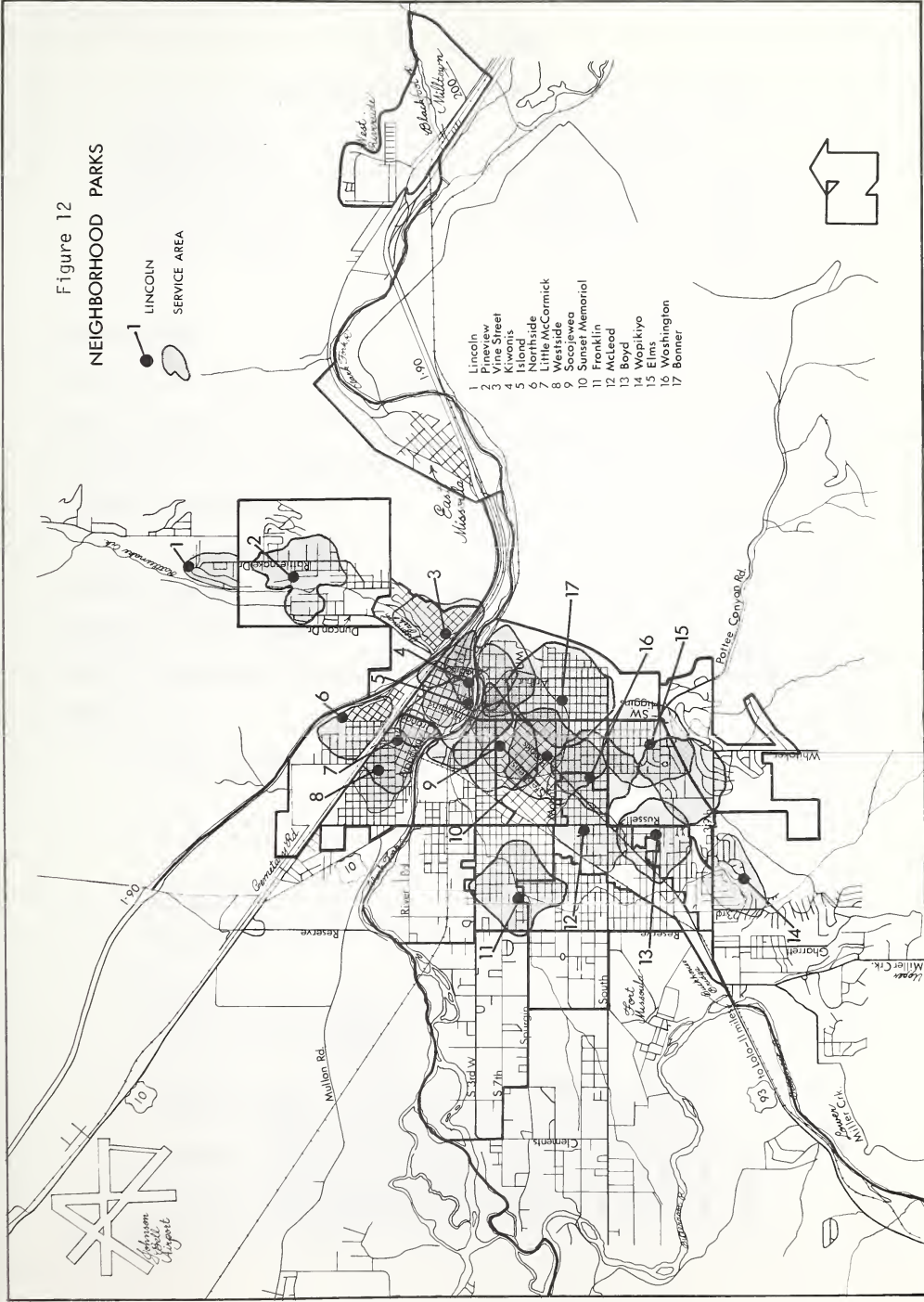


Table 3

INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES IN THE MISSOULA URBAN AREA

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>		<u>UofM</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u>	<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>SPA &</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>COMMERCIAL</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>ELEM.</u>	<u>H.S.</u>		<u>SERVICE</u>		<u>CLUB</u>	<u>CITY</u>		
Basketball Courts	22	5	7		2				36
Volleyball Courts	21	6	8		2				37
Indoor Tracks			2						2
Indoor Swimming Pools			1						2
Rifle Range						1		1	1
Archery Ranges	1					1		1	3
Roller Skating Rank								1	1
Bowling Alleys								2	3
Handball/Raquetball			1			4			3
Gymnasiums	22	4	8		2			3	12
Billiard Parlors		3	1			1			31
Wrestling Rooms		2	2						5
Gymnastic Rooms	6	2	2						4
Weight Rooms		2	1			2			8
Meeting Rooms			many	2					5
Multi-Purpose Rooms	2		1	3		2	5	1	2 plus
Phys. Conditioning Rms.				1		4			14
Movie Theatres/Stages	12	3	3					6	5
Libraries	22	3	1				1		24
Museum/Art Galleries			2				2		27
Craft Rooms	4	5	1	2					4
									12

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Fort Missoula | 8 Council Grove |
| 2 Higgins Block | 9 Hellgate Village |
| 3 Missoula County Courthouse | 10 Fort Fizzle |
| 4 Paxson House | 11 Lolo Pass |
| 5 St. Francis Xavier Church | 12 Mullan Road |
| 6 University Hall | 13 Smokejumper Site |
| 7 Carnegie Library | |

NATURAL AREAS

Two parcels of land in Missoula County have been nominated and are currently being evaluated for classification as natural areas. A 42-acre site owned by the University of Montana lies south of the Bitterroot River on the former Fort Missoula property.

A second property, also owned by the University of Montana, includes part of the north and west slopes of Mount Sentinel. A number of additional sites have been suggested as potential candidates for natural area classification.

These include:

1. Council Grove - mature Ponderosa Pine stand and site of the historic Indian treaty.
2. Kelly Island - bottomland hardwoods and game habitat on an island in the Clark Fork River.
3. Fort Missoula Timber Range - large area with diverse seral forest and grassland communities. The natural processes of restoration would permit nature study and scientific investigation of plant succession biotic responses that follow the secession of human intrusion on the site.
4. Blackfoot River Corridor/Chamberlain Creek Estuary - contains a significant section of a relatively pristine Blackfoot River corridor that includes habitat for bald eagles, blue herons, ospreys, beavers, elks, and other species.
5. Thibodeau Rapids - section of the Blackfoot River with outstanding scenic qualities.
6. Directors Grove in Gold Creek - 300-year-old Ponderosa Pine stand.
7. Waterworks Hill - ridge-line vegetation.

Other sites do exist, though no planning for designation are underway.

NEEDS

Recreation need is often defined as the difference between supply (existing capacity) and demand, which is usually based on user desires or preferences. In this plan needs are based on population and standards. Existing parks and school playgrounds, as well as the desires of County residents, were considered in determining the location and extent of recreation deficiencies.

REGIONAL PARKS

A detailed analysis of regional park needs is beyond the scope of this study, as it entails an evaluation of out-of-state and out-of-county use patterns. Regional park developments which provide overnight accommodations seem more than adequate to satisfy the needs of Missoula County residents. The State Outdoor Recreation Plan indicates that distribution, not capacity, is a major problem. For example, Seeley Lake campgrounds are often filled, while the use of Rock Creek areas consume only about 30 percent of the available capacity. The plan suggests that a shortage of capacity in water-oriented campgrounds may exist on peak weekends.

Recreation users in Montana seem to prefer undeveloped back country with minimum developments. Their second choice is general outdoor recreation sites. These preferences both relate to the recreational opportunities available in regional park complexes and dispersed recreation sites. User studies also tend to substantiate the conclusion that many of these sites serve as staging areas for off-site activities.

Regional day use facilities are quite limited within 50 miles of Missoula. Few developments in this zone are designed or managed specifically for day use

visitors. To best meet the needs of County residents, areas such as French-town Pond, Pattee Canyon Park and Chief Looking Glass fishing access site should be designed and managed exclusively for day use. Other areas should be developed for day use, especially sites adjacent to rivers and lakes which offer water-oriented activities.

DISTRICT PARKS

The analysis indicates that the absence of a district park is one of the major gaps in the recreation system. Based on the 1975 population, Missoula should have an area or areas containing about 300 acres. This need will increase to 465 acres by the year 2000.

Information on the preferences of Missoula residents for district parks is not available. Although survey respondents were not asked if they favored this type of facility, they did express a desire for activities associated with a district park. It appears that Missoula residents would support and utilize a park of this kind, even though data on perceived needs is not available to support this conclusion.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Based on the 1975 population, 136 acres of community park land are needed for the Missoula urban area. The total acreage needed will increase to 232 acres by the year 2000. A comparison of available community park lands with acreage needs indicates that existing parks are adequate. However, as the population expands, one or two new sites will be required. Additional community park lands should be reserved or acquired soon in rapidly developing areas of the City in advance of foreclosure of acquisition alternatives. For example,

the County lands off Spurgin Road identified in Figure 11 (page 27) should be reserved as a future community park.

Perceived needs, as expressed in the user surveys, are generally in support of additional community park facilities. Respondents expressed a desire for more indoor and outdoor facilities normally included in community park developments. Also, most residents favored the use of school gyms and playgrounds to help meet community recreation needs.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Using the 1974 population as a basis, acreage needs were determined for each neighborhood. A comparison of these needs with the acreage of existing neighborhood parks indicates an urban-wide deficiency of 92 acres in 1974. This unsatisfied need will increase to 185 acres by the year 2000. Deficiencies for individual neighborhoods are shown in Table 4.

Since population projections are available only for census divisions, a determination of future acreage needs for individual neighborhoods cannot be made. However, population increases can be expected in Farviews, South Hills, Target Range, Orchard Homes, and the Upper Rattlesnake. In addition, higher densities are probable in the Central Business District, McCormick and West Broadway areas. Acreage needs for neighborhood parks must be adjusted to account for anticipated growth in these areas.

An indication of current needs can also be derived from the resident use studies. Forty-six percent of the respondents in the urban survey expressed a need for additional neighborhood facilities. In addition, 22 percent stated

Table 4
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK NEEDS

<u>NEIGHBORHOOD</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>EXISTING PARKS</u>	
		<u>ACRES</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL ACREAGE NEEDED</u>
1. Upper Rattlesnake	Pineview	4.5	1.8
2. Lower Rattlesnake	Vine Street	1.9	2.1
3. Northside	North Side	2.8	2.3
4. West Broadway	Little McCormick	1.0	3.9
	West Side	4.4	
5. CBD	Kiwanis	5.0	0
6. McCormick	Sacajawea	1.6	5.9
7. Dickinson			4.5
8. Orchard Homes			5.2
9. Franklin	Franklin	3.1	6.2
10. Roosevelt	Memorial Rose	3.2	7.6
	Washington	2.3	
11. University	Bonner	4.8	6.8
12. Sentinel	Lester	1.5	0.4
	Elms	2.3	
13. 93-Strip	McLeod	2.4	2.8
14. Westside			8.9
15. C.S. Porter			2.1
16. Target Range			7.3
17. Russell	Boyd	1.9	4.3
18. South Hills	Wapikiya	4.0	7.8
19. Farviews			5.2
20. East Missoula			4.6
21. Bonner-West Riverside			2.3
22. Hellgate			3.6
TOTAL		46.7	95.6

that the nearest park was more than nine blocks from their residence. Although lacking in spatial and quantitative detail, perceived needs for neighborhood parks tends to substantiate the deficiencies identified in this section of the plan.

PLAYLOTS

Playlots or mini-parks can be described as small sites of one acre or less within residential areas that cater mostly to small children and elderly people. Playlots usually serve as surrogates to back yards. Where playlots exist, particularly in recent subdivisions, they are generally treated as back yard extensions by adjoining property owners.

Playlots do not appear necessary in most sections of Missoula. Large residential lots provide ample opportunity for the supervised activities of small children. Quiet areas for the elderly are also more often associated with back yards than with public parks. To reinforce this argument, nearly half of the respondents interviewed in the housing survey identified their back yards as the nearest play area.

QUIET AREAS

Except for large parks where audio-visual buffering is practical, active sports and passive recreational activities cannot be provided in a single area without conflicts between user groups. The models for developed parks favor activity-oriented developments and tend to overlook passive recreation. Provisions should be made for the latter in all classes of parks.

In Missoula, separate sites should be considered for active and passive recreation. Greenough Park is a good example of a park that does not conform to the community park model. It nevertheless serves a very important function as a quiet area. Although classified as neighborhood parks, Memorial Rose Garden, Sacajawea, Island, and Elms Parks are best described as quiet areas for passive recreation. These parks also serve as supervised play areas for small children. This type of activity is quite compatible with the primary purpose of quiet areas. It is recommended that similar areas should be provided in other sections of the City.

VILLAGE PARKS

Planning recreation in small towns requires a different approach from the multi-class park system proposed for Missoula. Most towns in Missoula County lack sufficient population to support more than a single village park. Park needs for Lolo, the one exception, are covered in the land use plan for that community (25).

The standards and typical designs for neighborhood or community parks are inappropriate for village parks. A general guide of ten acres per 1000 population seems more in keeping with the needs of a small town. The design of village parks should be highly flexible, and it should be based primarily on the desires of the local residents. Where possible, these sites should provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation. To reduce conflicts between user groups, facilities such as ball fields and family picnic areas should be separated and screened with vegetation.

The survey of County residents shows that several rural communities should be evaluated as potential candidates for village parks (Figure 5, page 13). These are Frenchtown, Huson, Piltzville, Bonner-Milltown-West Riverside, Big Flat, Seeley Lake, and Clinton. A number of communities also expressed interest in community halls and youth centers. These indoor facilities could be combined with or be located adjacent to the village park. Combination developments and shared facilities that include the village park, the local school and a community center are highly desirable.

INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

The need for additional indoor facilities was determined for the Missoula urban area, using the total population as a basis (Table 5). These needs were based on National Recreation and Park Association standards for individual facilities.

Table 5
NEED FOR INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>NO. NEEDED</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
Basketball courts	5	
Volleyball/badminton courts	0	dual use of basketball courts
Indoor swimming pool	1	50-meter pool
Handball/raquetball courts	10	
Indoor track	1	
Ice rink	1	develop commercially
Rifle/archery range	1	develop commercially
Tennis courts	5	develop commercially
Riding arena	1	develop commercially

No attempt was made to evaluate the needs for specific sections of the City. Needs, therefore, apply to the urban area at large. Since the service area and clientele groups for indoor facilities approximate those of a community park, Playfair Park, McCormick Park (or a downtown site) and Fort Missoula appear to be the most logical locations for future indoor sports centers. Indoor facilities could be concentrated at a central location or a limited number of activities could be offered at strategic locations throughout the urban area.

COMMUNITY CENTERS

The recommended NRPA standard for community centers is 1/25,000. Since Missoula does not have any large public complex of this sort, a facility of this type would be desirable. A centrally located community center complex could satisfy many of the deficiencies that were identified in the indoor recreation facilities analysis. The complex could contain five or six basketball courts, volleyball/badminton courts, ten handball courts, a swimming pool, an indoor track, an indoor ice rink, craft facilities, and meeting space.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

Based on the NRPA standard of 1/10,000 people, it appears that there are plenty of neighborhood centers in Missoula. On the assumption that each of the 22 neighborhoods should have within their boundaries a gymnasium and meeting space (such as an elementary school), five neighborhoods are without neighborhood centers. These are McCormick, Westside, Russell, Farviews, and East Missoula. Of these neighborhoods, only East Missoula does not have relatively easy access to a facility of this type.

Neighborhood centers are also needed in several rural towns (Figure 5, page 13). Residents of Bonner, Condon, Greenough, Lolo, Potomac, Rock Creek, and Seeley Lake have expressed interest in community halls or youth centers. The feasibility of developing centers for each of these communities should be investigated.

PROGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT

The primary focus of the program of development is to identify specific sites to serve specific functions in the recreation system. No design other than relationship diagrams to show the types and intensity of development has been proposed. Likewise, capital budgeting and program scheduling has been deferred to future elements of the planning process.

THE RIVER PARK SYSTEM

The most significant recreation resources within the Missoula urban area are the Clark Fork and Bitterroot Rivers. These major waterways, plus the Blackfoot River and Rattlesnake Creek, provide the opportunity for one of the most outstanding river park systems in the country. To date, relatively minor amounts of development have encroached onto the floodplains of these waterways.

The river park system should be the backbone of future urban recreation opportunities. Appropriately designed and managed, the river park system can satisfy most future recreation needs. Except for neighborhood parks, these waterways offer easily accessible sites for community, district and regional parks. A full range of activities can be designed into the river

system, including active-play areas, natural areas and historic sites, as well as trails and boating areas.

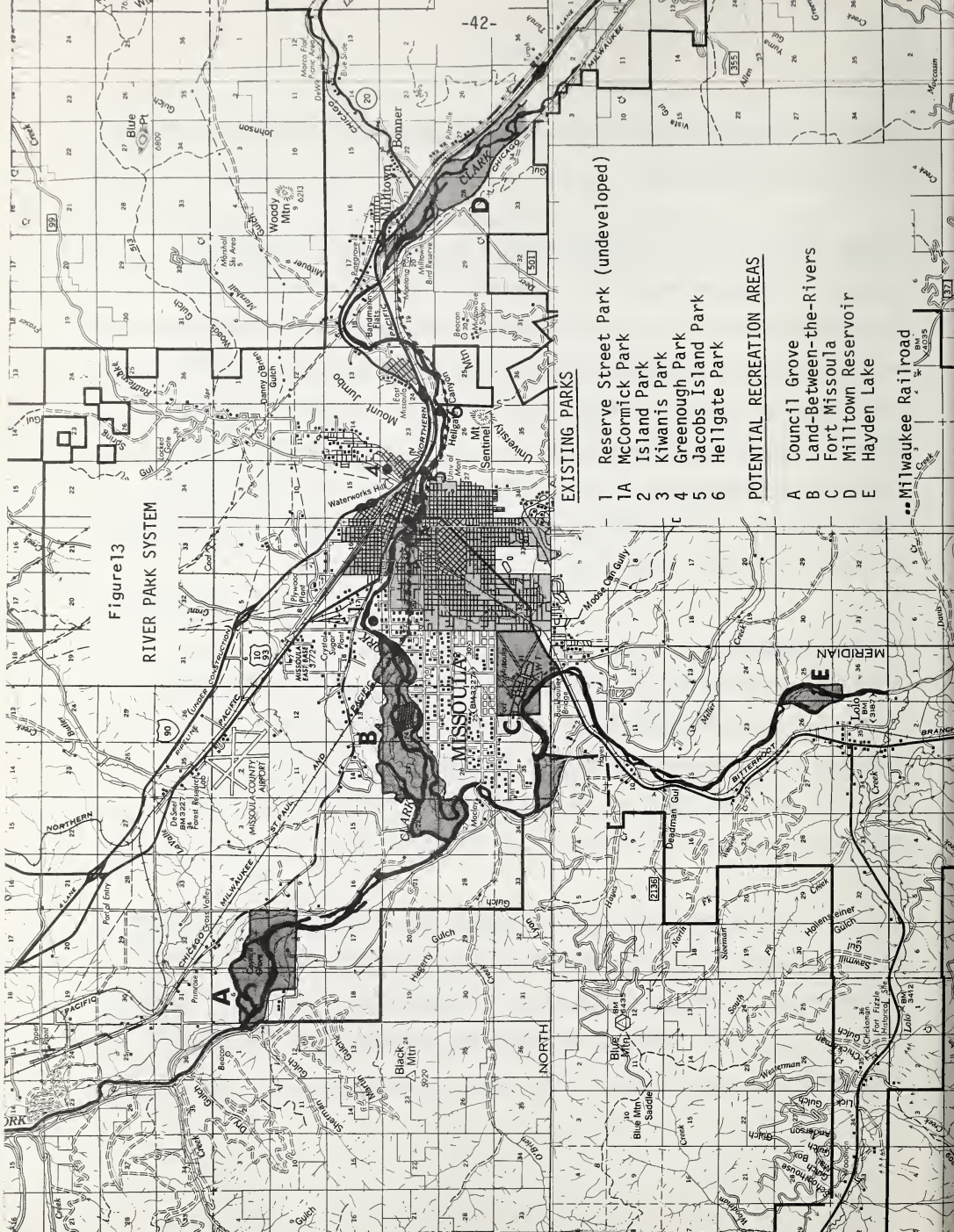
Because of the size and complexity of the river park system, a definite perimeter has not been established. Generally, the boundary would follow the 100-year floodplain except for unusually wide areas in agricultural uses. More significant is the identification of acquisition or management units within the river corridor that will serve a specific function or clientele groups. These units are shown on Figure 13 and include Milltown Reservoir, Kelly Island, Council Grove, Fort Missoula, Hayden Lake, the Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way and the downtown parks. Also important is the identification of specific historic sites within or near the river corridor.

Milltown Reservoir

The Bonner hydroelectric dam forms a 400-acre reservoir at the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers. This area is designated as a bird sanctuary by the Montana Department of Fish and Game. Milltown Reservoir offers the only flat-water recreation resource in the Missoula urban area. Yet boating access is very limited and public use is low.

The reservoir has potential for an outstanding day use regional park. Boating access, swimming, picnicking, and other family activities could be provided at nominal cost. The lake is not suitable for motorboating and water skiing because of its size. Motorized use would also be incompatible with the wildlife preserve.

Figure 13
RIVER PARK SYSTEM



EXISTING PARKS

1 Reserve Street Park (undeveloped)

1A McCormick Park

2 Island Park

3 Kiwanis Park

4 Greenough Park

5 Jacobs Island Park

6 Hellgate Park

POTENTIAL RECREATION AREAS

A Council Grove

B Land-Between-the-Rivers

C Fort Missoula

D Milltown Reservoir

E Hayden Lake

•• Milwaukee Railroad

Downtown Parks

The river park system would link a number of existing downtown parks together into a functional unit. McCormick Park, Greenough Park, Island Park, Kiwanis Park, Jacobs Island Park, and Reserve Street Park would be enhanced by the proposed river park corridor. Joining these sites with foot paths and bike-ways along the river would improve access and increase their value. These parks coupled with a green belt along the river corridor would be focal points for community activities and downtown rehabilitation.

Land-Between-The-Rivers

The floodplain at the confluence of the Clark Fork and the Bitterroot Rivers consists of a series of islands that could be one of the most significant riverine natural areas in western Montana. The islands between the Milwaukee Railroad Bridge and Kelly Island on the west collectively offer 1,000 to 1,200 acres of wetland and bottom land hardwoods for nature study, trails and wildlife habitat. An added attraction for recreation is the network of river channels surrounding the islands, which would provide 10 to 12 miles of water for boating.

The uniqueness of the islands and their close proximity to the center of population make this an outstanding recreation area. Since the river channels preclude easy access to most of the island, the type, amount and location of public use can readily be controlled. Tower Street and Spurgin Road on the south side and the fishing access site off Council Way north of the river appear most suitable as access routes. Facilities such as parking, picnicking, trails, and boating access could be developed at the Tower Street and Spurgin

Road sites. Foot bridges or cable crossings would provide access to trail loops or to some of the islands. Access to certain islands should not be provided.

The island complex should be developed as a natural area. Historic records indicate that this might be the site of the Hellgate Treaty of 1855 between Governor Issac J. Stevens of Washington Territory and the Flathead, Kootenais and Pend d'Oreilles Indians. The location of the treaty site should be researched and nominated as a candidate for the National Registry of Historic Sites.

Council Grove

A grove of large Ponderosa Pine trees on this unit of the river system is reputed to be the site of the Hellgate Treaty. As mentioned earlier, the exact location of that historic event should be established.

The Council Grove area has significance for other reasons. It is close to a ford in the Clark Fork for a major wagon road up the Bitterroot River. This crossing was probably used by Lewis and Clark in their historic journey. The Council Grove unit also serves as a western anchor point for the river system. The old-growth Ponderosa Pine stand is important for both recreation and natural area purposes. A boating access point is needed in the vicinity of Council Grove on Harper Bridge.

Fort Missoula

In terms of recreation use, the Fort Missoula unit is probably the most important

in the river system. This park could function as an urban-wide district park that would offer intensive recreational development within a natural environment. Facilities could include boating, picnicking, golfing, trails, winter sports, nature study, and playground activities. This historic park, the active sports area, and the proposed golf course could be managed as enclaves within the district park. Internal circulation, access, parking, sanitary facilities, and the general aesthetic character of the area would best be developed as elements of a district park. In addition, expanded opportunities, such as nature study areas, use of the Bitterroot River corridor, an indoor sports center, hiking-bicycle-bridle trails, and visual resource lands, could become integral parts of the district park development.

Certain other features near Fort Missoula are of interest to recreation users. University of Montana lands across the Bitterroot River from the Fort have been nominated for designation under the Natural Areas Act. McCauley Butte is a significant visual resource that should be protected, and the U.S. Forest Service lands on MacLay Flats have value for nature study. These sites should all be integrated into, or planned and managed as part of, the Fort Missoula recreation complex.

Hayden Lake

This unit is in the 100-year floodplain of the Bitterroot River. The existing lake and the lands between it and the river could be developed into an attractive park to serve Lolo and the southern sections of the urban area. Gravel mining could continue on the site, and that activity could enhance the site for future recreation purposes. The area should be master planned so that soil materials are deposited to minimize site preparation costs.

Milwaukee Railroad Right-of-Way

The Five Valleys Park Association is attempting to work out an arrangement with the Milwaukee Railroad and the Burlington Northern Railroad that would allow Milwaukee trains to run on Burlington Northern tracks through Missoula. Such an arrangement would free the Milwaukee right-of-way for park development. The track involved in the proposal totals 13.8 miles and contains 202.4 acres.

Removal of the Milwaukee tracks would add significantly to the river park system. Presently, the railroad follows the south bank of the river through Hellgate Canyon and the central part of the City. If converted to park land, it would provide a green belt along four miles of river which could be used for hiking, bicycling and equestrian trails. The railroad grade would also provide direct bikeway and trail access to the center of town to the Land-Between-the-Rivers complex. As an added feature, the railroad property would improve walking and bicycling access to all parks in the downtown area. This would greatly increase their availability.

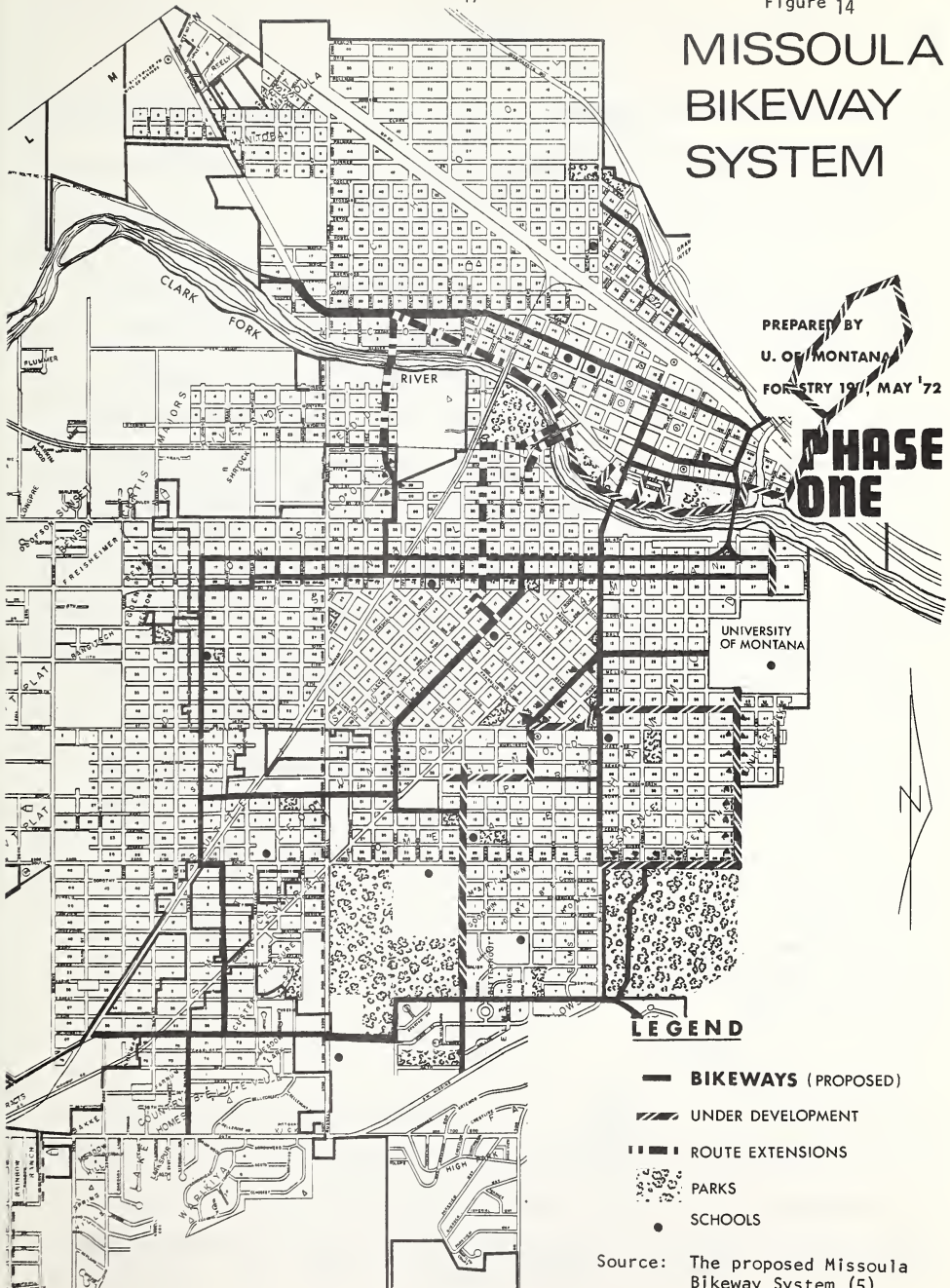
A BIKEWAY SYSTEM

Bicycling is one of the most rapidly increasing recreation activities. In 1972, a group of students from the University of Montana designed a bikeway system for Missoula. The proposal recommended the development of special, exclusive bike lanes to physically separate autos and bicycles. The system was designed to link parks, schools and commercial areas with residential areas. A map of the proposed bikeway system is shown in Figure 14. The need for a complete bikeway system to serve the entire urban area is obvious. Last summer, five to ten bicycle/auto accidents per month were recorded within the City limits.

MISSOULA BIKEWAY SYSTEM

PREPARED BY
U. OF MONTANA
FOR STRY 1971, MAY '72

PHASE ONE



Source: The proposed Missoula
Bikeway System (5).

More than 80 percent of the residents who responded to the planning survey stated that a bikeway system is needed in Missoula. Marked bicycle paths along major roads throughout the County are also needed.

Two projects to create bicycle paths have been submitted. A bikeway project funded by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation is partially completed along the Clark Fork River. This project should be expedited so the route is useable. A second project has been proposed to develop bikeways across the Orange Street Bridge. This project was submitted to the Montana Highway Department under the Bikeway Demonstration Act. These projects, as well as the urban-wide bikeways system should receive highest priorities.

A NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

A number of historic sites in the Missoula Valley have national and regional significance. Traveler's Rest and the Lolo Trail have been included in the National Register of Historic Sites. Rather than nominating additional sites, it is recommended that a National Historic District be established. Areas that could be included in a historic district are:

Indian History

Hellgate Canyon - trail and ambush site
Lolo Trail - Nez Perce buffalo trail
Lolo Pass - route of Indians and early settlers
Other Indian sites

Lewis and Clark Expedition

Lewis and Clark Trail	1905/6
Traveler's Rest	1905/6
Grant Creek campsite	1905/6
River Ford - Clark Fork	1905/6

Early Settlement

Mullan Road	1853	Hellgate Village	1860	Fort Fizzle	1877
Hellgate Treaty	1855	Fort Missoula	1877		

NEIGHBORHOODS AND PARKS

Neighborhood parks are the basic building blocks for the recreation system, and from some aspects are the most important park areas. Neighborhood parks, along with local schools, are focal points for neighborhood activities; they are crucial elements of a locally-oriented, public service system, and they furnish the most basic type of recreation experiences for local residents. Critical needs for neighborhood parks are shown in Figure 15.

Combined school-park sites should be promoted where possible. Both should be centrally located to reinforce neighborhood structure and activities. In several neighborhoods, school properties are currently functioning as neighborhood parks and are helping to offset acreage needs. Undeveloped park lands are shown on Figure 16, and recommendations for each site are summarized in Table 6. Recommendations for individual neighborhoods follow:

1. Upper Rattlesnake (Need=1.8 acres)

Additional development is not recommended at this time. Heritage Park, Syringa Park and Hamilton Park have limited developmental potential. Highest priority should be on acquisition, via the park dedication law, open space land and voluntary conservation easement act, of a greenbelt corridor along Rattlesnake Creek. Other sites adjacent to that waterway, such as Montana Power are also important.

2. Lower Rattlesnake (Need=2.1 acres)

Most of the need in the neighborhood is satisfied by Prescott School and the new Gregory Park. Park site 9 and Bugbee property would contribute additional open space to the river park system. No new parks are proposed at this time.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK NEEDS

Figure 15

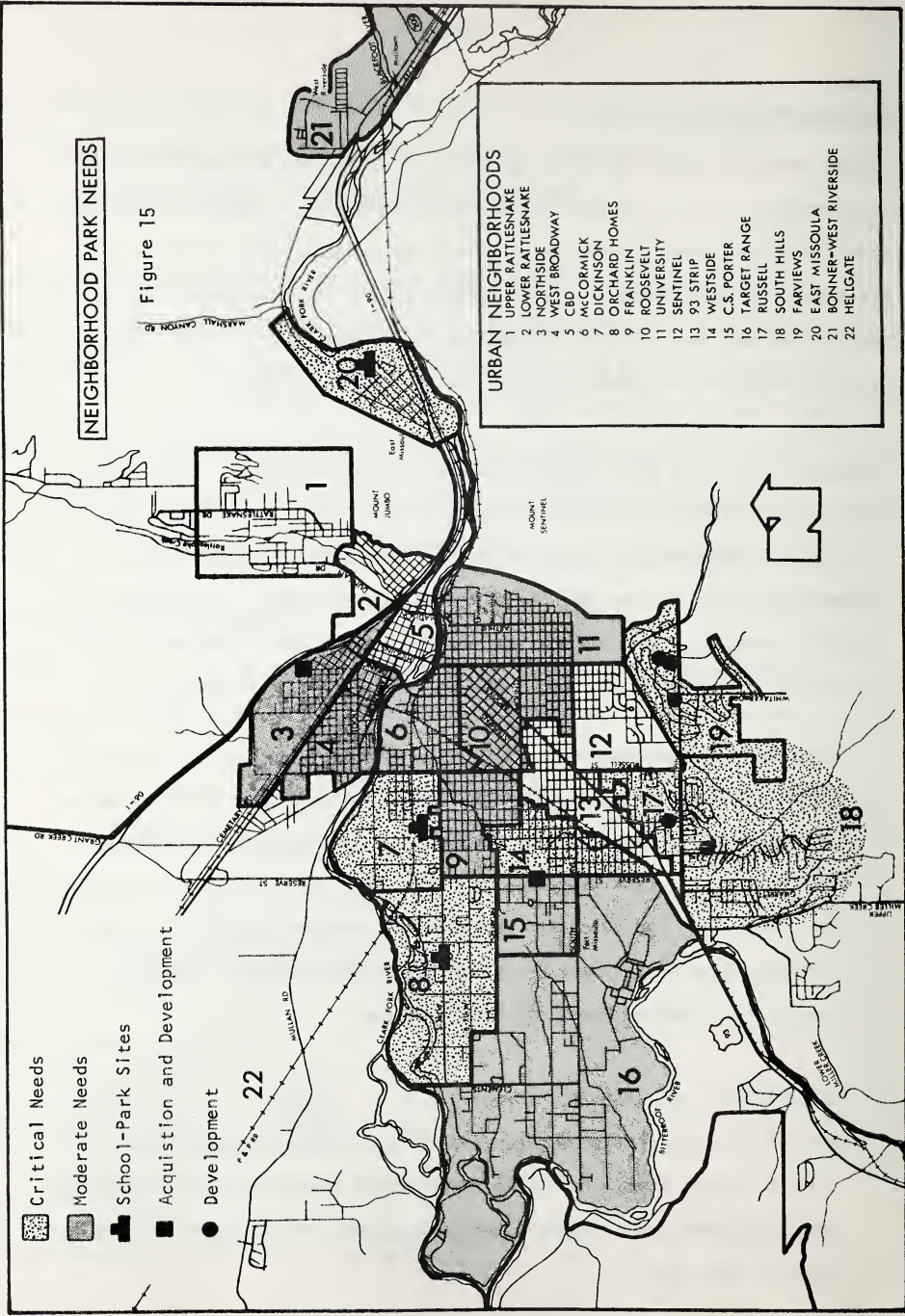


Figure 16

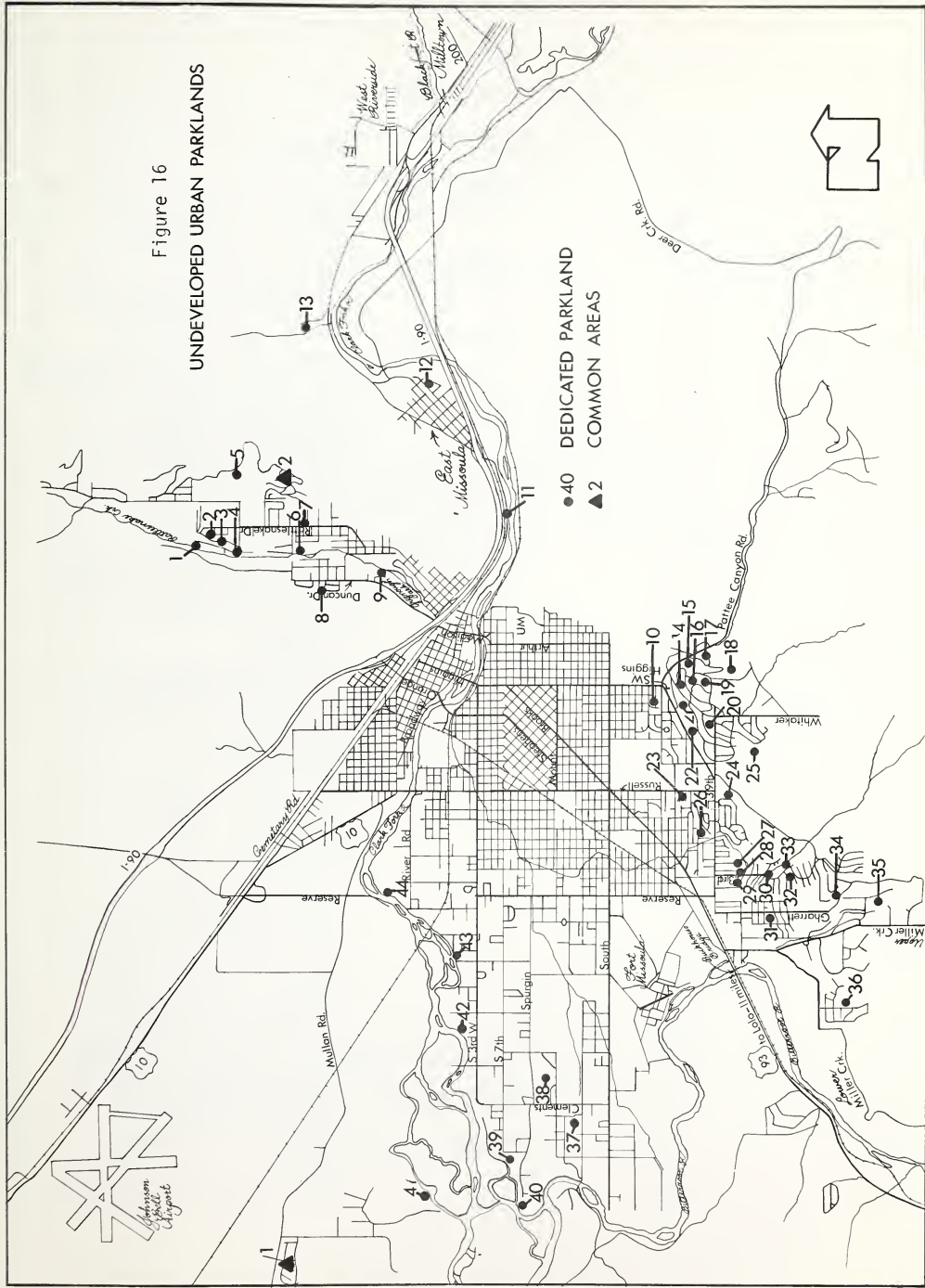


Table 6

UNDEVELOPED URBAN PARKLANDS

Map No.	Areas	Name	Recommendations
1	6.1	Lincoln Park	part developed - part open space
2	1.3	Heritage Park	playlot and tennis court
3	1.9		open space - maintained
4	0.5		open space or disposal
5	1.9	Syringa Park	playlot or disposal
6	8.7	Tom Green Park	part of river park system
7	0.3		open space - maintained
8	2.3	Hamilton Park	playlot, part open space
9	0.5		access to Greenough Park
10	1.2	Fish Pond	open space - site rehabilitation
11	3.0	Hellgate Park	part of river park system
12	0.6		open space or playlot
13	1.1		open space or disposal
14	0.9	Oziya Park	open space - maintained
15	12.7	Hemayagon Park	open space - natural
16	0.8	Wastemago Park	neighborhood park
17	7.1	Kokaski Park	open space - natural
18	18.0	Highland Park	open space - natural
19	0.6	Tirratis Park	neighborhood park
20	1.2	Hi-Yan-Ka Park	playlot or neighborhood park
21	3.8		open space - natural
22	1.4		open space - natural
23	2.3		open space
24	2.3		open space or disposal
25	10.0	High Park	future neighborhood park
26	4.4	Bellevue Park	open space - maintained
27 & 28	4.0		neighborhood park
29	2.3	Honeysuckle Park	neighborhood park
30	1.0		open space - natural
31	2.5	Floral Park	open space - natural
32	5.4		open space - natural
33	3.0		open space - natural
34	0.5		open space
35	22.3		open space - natural
36	5.0	Marilyn Park	future neighborhood park
37	4.2		future neighborhood park
38	7.3		open space maintained
39	4.2		part of river park system
40	20.8		part of river park system
41	2.9		open space or disposal
42	6.3		open space or disposal
43	1.0		part of river park system
44	20.0	Reserve St. Park	part of river park system
45	4.7		future neighborhood park
46	1.0	Bella Vista Park	neighborhood park
47	1.0		open space (Block D)
48	1.0	Ninkpata Park	open space - maintained
49	5.0		BLM site
50	10.0		County lands - old US 10 east

3. Northside (Need=2.3 acres)

A limited amount of recreation activity occurs on the Whittier School playground. To adequately meet the needs in the Northside neighborhood, a two or three acre acquisition (or lease) is recommended in the block northwest of Cooley Street and Worden Avenue. This site is presently being used as a playfield.

4. West Broadway (Need=3.9 acres)

Lowell School and West Side Park exemplify a school-park development. However, not enough land was reserved to adequately serve both. The major deficiency is the absence of playground and playfield facilities. The best possibilities for increasing recreation opportunities are sites within the proposed river park system.

5. Central Business District

Additional parks are not needed in the CBD. The river park system will aesthetically enhance the downtown area in addition to increasing recreation opportunities. A significant amount of recreation is satisfied on the playground of Central School.

6. McCormick (Need=5.9 acres)

Sacajawea and McCormick parks are within this neighborhood. These parks plus the proposed river park system offer significant recreation opportunities. The major deficiency is the lack of playfield and playground facilities which cannot be satisfied without acquisition.

7. Dickinson (Need=4.5 acres)

The only recreation opportunity now in the neighborhood is the playground at Dickinson School. The acquisition of vacant land next to Dickinson School is recommended.

8. Orchard Homes (Need=5.2 acres)

The Hawthorne School playground furnishes the only available recreation opportunity in the neighborhood. The vacant land adjacent to this school should be acquired now to meet present and future recreation needs.

9. Franklin (Need=6.2 acres)

Even with Franklin School and Franklin Park, there is a need for an additional neighborhood park. This need can only be satisfied by acquisition. Purchasing and developing land adjacent to Dickinson School would serve both the Franklin and Dickinson neighborhoods.

10. Roosevelt (Need=7.6 acres)

This high density residential area is presently served by Memorial and Washington Parks, and by the Roosevelt and Washington school playground. An additional neighborhood park is needed, but undeveloped sites are not available for acquisition.

11. University (Need=6.8 acres)

Bonner Park and Paxson School provide recreation opportunities for the University neighborhood. Acquisition would be necessary to satisfy neighborhood park needs, and no vacant lands are available for this purpose.

12. Sentinel (Need=0.4 acres)

This neighborhood is well supplied with parks and school playgrounds.

13. 93-Strip (Need=2.8 acres)

McLeod Park and Jefferson School playground furnish adequate recreation for the present needs of the 93-Strip area.

14. Westside (Need=8.9 acres)

The Westside neighborhood does not have access to a park or school playground. High priority should be on the acquisition of a park site for this area.

15. C.S. Porter (Need=2.1 acres)

The C.S. Porter School playground is the only park facility in the neighborhood. Recreation opportunities are inadequate and will increase as the population expands. A neighborhood park to serve the Westside and C.S. Porter neighborhoods seems most appropriate.

16. Target Range (Need=7.3 acres)

The provision of neighborhood parks in the Target Range area is complicated by low population density. Three sites seem most appropriate if developed with limited facilities. These are sites 37 and 38 and a BLM site southwest of 35th and North Avenues. The Fort Missoula Military Reservation land in Section 25, now owned by Missoula County, should be reserved for future public leisure time activities that include a community park when the need arises.

17. Russell (Need=4.3 acres)

The potential for solving neighborhood park deficiencies in the Russell area is limited. The Russell School playground and Playfair Park help to offset the lack of a neighborhood facility. The southern portion of Bellevue Park (site 26) has some developmental possibilities, but it would require site modification including rerouting or undergrounding irrigation ditches.

18. South Hills (Need=7.8 acres)

An outstanding neighborhood park and greenbelt can be developed on County-owned parklands. Sites 27, 28 and 29, developed and managed as a single park, could include a variety of active and passive recreation facilities. Wapikiya Park should also be developed as an active play area and tied to Meadow Hills School via a greenbelt walkway through the above sites. Marilyn Park (site 36) should also be developed in the future to serve an expanding population in that area. Other County parklands in the neighborhood should be maintained as open space by adjacent landowners or a homeowners association.

19. Farviews (Need=5.2 acres)

Most County park sites in the Farviews area are too small or too steep for neighborhood parks. Sites 16 and 19 developed in conjunction with adjacent school lands offers the best potential for a neighborhood park. Hi-Yan-Ka Park (site 20) also has potential for limited facilities if combined with adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands. High Park (site 25) should be reserved as a future neighborhood park. All other County parklands should be maintained as open space by adjacent landowners or a homeowners association.

20. East Missoula (Need=4.6 acres)

Bella Vista Park (site 46) adjacent to the proposed East Missoula School offers an outstanding opportunity for a neighborhood park. The park could be enhanced by adding lands on the low butte overlooking Brick Yard Road and the Clark Fork River. An access site to the river for East Missoula residents is also desirable.

21. Bonner-West Riverside (Need=2.3 acres)

The most suitable site for a park to serve this neighborhood is adjacent to the elementary school. This site, on school property and U.S. Plywood lands, is now used extensively for recreation. This site should be adequate if it is redesigned to provide additional facilities. The County lands (site 50) west of the Bonner exit from Interstate 90 offer little potential at this time.

22. Hellgate (Need=3.6 acres)

Because of the low population density, no neighborhood parks are recommended for immediate development. Site 45 should be reserved for future recreation needs.

RURAL PARK SITES

In view of the number of developed sites and dispersed recreation opportunities provided by state and federal agencies, the need for County-managed facilities in rural areas is limited. Missoula County does, however, have 26 parcels of land, containing 240 acres, acquired through the subdivision process. These sites are depicted in Figure 17. Recommendations for each parcel are provided in Table 7.

Figure 17

UNDEVELOPED RURAL PARKLANDS

- 1 PLANNING AREAS
- 20 ● DEDICATED PARKLAND
- 11 ▲ COMMON AREAS

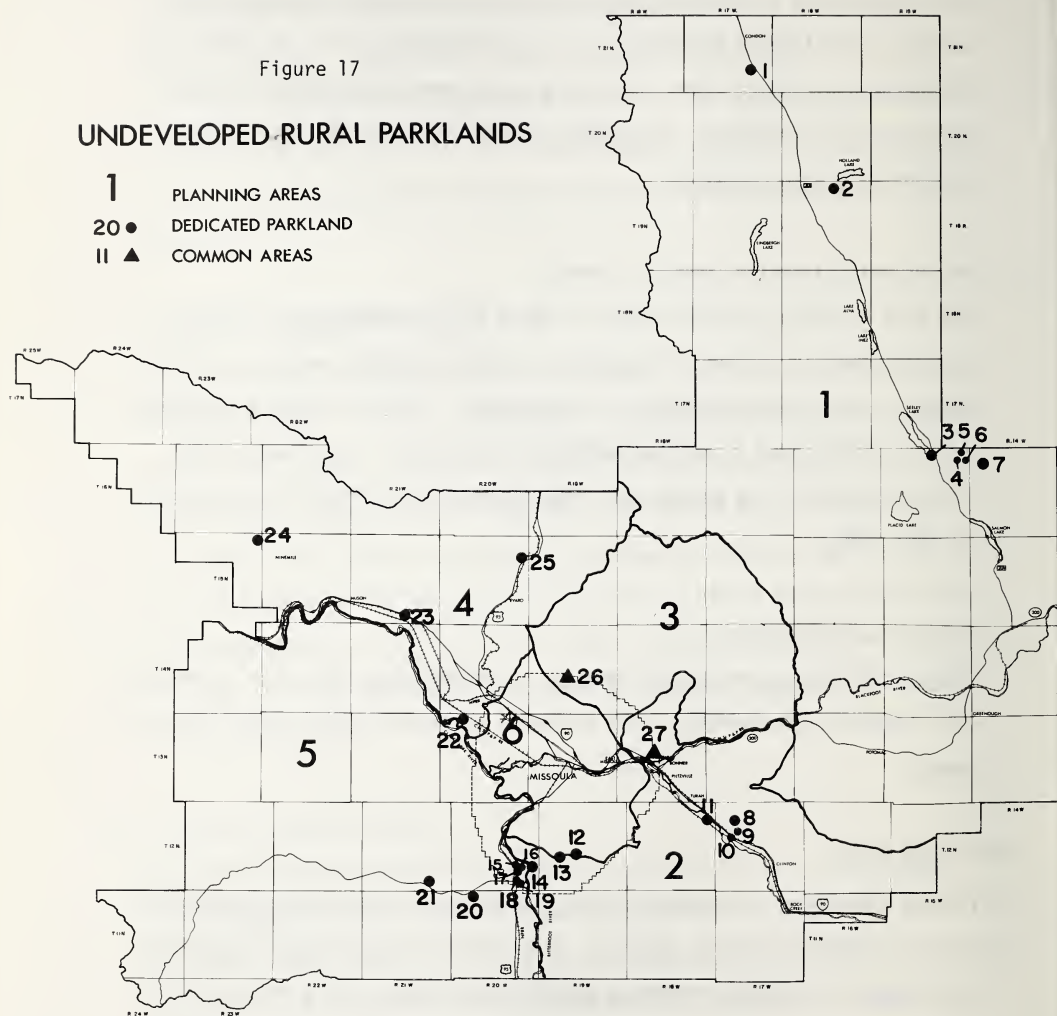


Table 7

UNDEVELOPED RURAL PARKLANDS

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
A.	<u>Seeley Lake - Blackfoot Valley Division</u>		
1	T21N,R17W,S26	21.0	fishing access site on Swan River
2	T19N,R16W,S3	3.7	open space or disposal
3	T16N,R15W,S3	3.3	open space (Clearwater Park)
4	T16N,R15W,S1	28.3	open space - good natural area
5	T16N,R15W,S10	5.0	future town park (Hemlock Park)
6	T16N,R15W,S1	5.0	open space
7	T16N,R14W,S1	37.0	open space
B.	<u>Bonner - Clinton Division</u>		
8	T12N,R17W,S8	1.9	open space
9	T12N,R17W,S17	10.0	partially developed town park
10	T12N,R17W,S17	0.4	open space
11a	T12N,R18W,S12	6.1	river access - future development
11b	T12N,R18W,S12	2.1	playlot or disposal
11c	T12N,R18W,S12	3.9	open space or disposal
12	T12N,R19W,S21	2.9	open space - natural
13	T12N,R19W,S20	7.5	open space or disposal
14a	T12N,R20W,S25	6.8	town or neighborhood park
14b	T12N,R20W,S25	0.8	river access
14c,d,e	T12N,R20W,S25	4.4	open space
C.	<u>Missoula North Division</u>		
26	T14N,R19W,S21	20.0	open space (common area)
D.	<u>Frenchtown - Evaro Division</u>		
22	T13N,R20W,S5	4.5	adjacent to Council Grove Historic site
23	T15N,R20W,S34	0.3	Frenchtown Public Park
24	T15N,R23W,S1	9.3	open space (Piney Meadow)
25	T15N,R20W,S12	6.3	open space or disposal
E.	<u>LoLo Division</u>		
15a,b,c	T12N,R20W,S26 & 27	7.9	open space
15d,e	T12N,R20W,S27	1.8	open space
15f	T12N,R20W,S27	1.7	neighborhood park if more land is added
15g,h	T12N,R20W,S27	5.0	open space trade disposal
15k	T12N,R20W,S27 & 34	3.0 (est.)	neighborhood park acquisition
15l	T12N,R20W,S34	2.0 (est.)	overlook - acquisition

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
16	T12N,R20W,S26	3.1	open space
17a,b,c	T12N,R20W,S26	3.5	3-unit neighborhood park
17d,e	T12N,R20W,S26	12.9	part of the river park system
18	T12N,R20W,S35	2.2	open space
19	T12N,R20W,S35	8.3	community park
20	T11N,R20W,S5	7.6	open space
21	T12N,R21W,S35	4.6	open space

Proposals for development are limited in each division except Lolo. The population size and density in that division indicates a need for several developed park areas. A three-unit neighborhood park is proposed for the Lakeview Addition. One parcel could be developed as a playground, another as a ball-field and the third could be maintained as a quiet area for passive recreation. In the Westview Addition, most of the dedicated parkland is too steep for any use except open space. Land should be reserved or acquired between Essex and Cap deVilla for a neighborhood park. Another significant site that should be reserved as a park is the overlook area at the end of Ridgeway. Future development proposals should also include the development of a community park adjacent to the community center.

A very significant role of the County concerns river access and management. In the Blackfoot River Management Area, the County is working cooperatively with private landowners and state agencies to perpetuate public use on private lands. The emphasis is to encourage responsible local use of the river while retaining riparian lands in private ownership. Similar techniques, modified to fit particular situations, should be applied to other river stretches in the County.

INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

Table 5 on page 37 summarizes the need for indoor facilities. Because of the development cost, proposals for indoor facilities would likely require a referendum to approve general obligation bonds. In the immediate future, it appears most feasible to finance and develop indoor facilities in conjunction with the proposed civic center or the high school's expansion program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY ISSUES

- Highest priority should be placed on the creation of a County park department, with responsibilities for developing and managing County recreation areas and programs. An urban park district or a consolidated City/County park department is highly desirable, particularly in dealing with County programs within the urban area.
- Techniques to protect critical elements of the open space system should be explored and implemented so as to retain and enhance the quality of life for Missoula County residents.
- A system of recreation areas that offers a wide variety of recreation experience for all age and socioeconomic groups should be developed.
- Acquisition and development programs should concentrate on the satisfaction of needs identified in the recreation plan. Emphasis should be on major gaps in the recreation system, such as day use facilities and neighborhood parks.
- Park lands required to satisfy the future needs of the expanding urban population should be acquired or reserved as soon as possible. Otherwise, the escalation of land values could make future acquisitions prohibitively expensive.

- Where feasible, the acquisition of limited interests in land should be favored over fee simple acquisition. Scenic easements, conservation easements, development rights, and compensable regulations frequently can be used to obtain limited rights to land, either by gift or at nominal cost.
- Recreation areas and open spaces should be managed for highest quality, in keeping with user desires and land capability limitations. The resolution of conflicts between recreation user groups should always favor quality over quantity and non-consumptive over consumptive uses.
- State and federal agencies should be encouraged to develop and manage recreation and open space lands in accordance with the County recreation plan to enhance opportunities for County residents, as well as out-of-state and out-of-county visitors. These agencies should emphasize regional day use opportunities within 50 miles of Missoula, in addition to natural resource-based recreation experiences.
- Critical resources such as historic sites, river corridors, natural areas, and natural resource lands should be protected. The County should take full advantage of state and federal legislation and programs designed to protect these key resources.
- Recreation planning should be made a permanent element of the County comprehensive planning process. This should include periodic plan revisions, detailed user studies, fiscal programming, and capital budgeting, as well as the completion of the program of development and the implementation phases of the current planning effort.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

- The number one priority is the creation of the river park system, including the Bonner Reservoir, Land-Between-the-Rivers, Council Grove, Fort Missoula, and Hayden Lake units. The Fort Missoula site should be developed as a district park to provide a full range of day use recreation opportunities.
- Neighborhood parks should be developed to provide active and passive recreation opportunities in each neighborhood. These areas should reinforce neighborhood plans and programs, and serve as focal points of neighborhood activities.
- The major river corridors in the County offer some of the most significant recreation opportunities. Highest priority should be placed on protecting these rivers from undesirable development and on the perpetuation of appropriate public use and access. The Blackfoot River and the Five Valleys River projects should serve as models for a County-wide river program.
- The Rattlesnake watershed, Fort Missoula Timber Reserve and Blue Mountain can provide unique recreation opportunities. Their management should emphasize non-consumptive, appreciative-symbolic types of recreation in resolving conflicts between competing user groups.
- The development of a bikeway system in the urban area and on major rural highways should be promptly initiated. Safety factors reinforced with expressed user desires emphasize the need for bikeways.

- Village parks should be provided in small towns that include indoor sport facilities and community centers where feasible.
- A network of multi-purpose and special use trails should be developed. Opportunities such as river corridors, abandoned railroad grades, utility corridors, and open space lands offer possibilities for linking urban parks to existing trail systems on resource lands.
- A number of indoor facilities are needed, including a swimming pool, an indoor tract, basketball courts, handball courts, and an indoor ice skating rink. Where feasible, these facilities should be developed jointly with the Fort Missoula High School, as part of the proposed civic center or in existing community parks.

GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTERING PARK DEDICATION LAWS

General

- Where feasible, neighborhood and community park sites should be identified and acquired or reserved in advance of land subdivision.
- Sites acquired through the land subdivision process should be suitable for integration into the recreation and open space system, and they should conform to the County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
- A preliminary park plan should be prepared jointly by the subdivider and the County park agency when a park is proposed within a subdivision. This plan should describe the size, physical characteristics, proposed layout of facilities, and the number of people to be served, and it should be

required as part of the submission for subdivision plat approval.

- Steep terrain, floodplains and other lands unsuitable for development within subdivision boundaries should be held or donated as common open space or low-intensity recreation use areas. In specific cases, these lands could satisfy park land dedication requirements.
- Common open space should include provisions for non-public development and maintenance, i.e., a homeowners association.
- Only subdivisions which cannot provide land suitable for neighborhood parks or common open space should contribute cash in lieu of park dedication.
- Money accepted in lieu of park dedication should be deposited into a park fund for use in the acquisition and development of parks recreation areas in accordance with the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
- The County should press for an amendment to the cash in lieu provision in the subdivision platting act to allow for cash donation to the park fund based on fair market value of subdivided real estate. Without this revision of the law, the cash in lieu option is not viable and should be used only as a last resort.

Urban Subdivisions

- Options for park land dedications in urban subdivision should be evaluated in the following sequence:

- Sites suitable for development as neighborhood parks should have highest priority.
 - Common open space would be acceptable where obtaining developable park sites is not feasible.
 - Cash in lieu provisions should be viewed as a third and least desirable alternative.
-
- Where possible, dedicated park site acquired via the subdivision process should conform to criteria for neighborhood parks, as outlined in the County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
-
- The size and location of park dedications should be evaluated in terms of projected neighborhood populations and their needs.
-
- Sites schedules for neighborhood park developments should:
 - Have 4 to 16 acres.
 - Be within a 15-minute walk of 1600 to 6400 people.
 - Accommodate playfield and playground type facilities.
-
- The approval of sites not meeting neighborhood parks criteria should be based on their use as common open space that include provisions for non-public maintenance.

Rural Subdivisions

- Dedicated lands in subdivisions beyond the developing urban fringe should be acquired only as common open space, unless they are part of or are

contiguous with a major park or river corridor proposal.

- Common open space reserves should be based on land capability factors, as well as a percentage of the acreage.
- Riparian lands within lake and river corridors should be given first priority in the selection of lands for park dedication. Other open space lands for optional consideration include wildlife habitat, biking/hiking/riding corridors, conservation reserve lands, and visual resource lands.
- Provision should be made for public use of and access to rivers and lakes within or adjacent to subdivision boundaries.
- The acquisition of perpetual conservation easements and public use agreements should be investigated to determine if they satisfy the park dedication requirements of the subdivision platting act as an alternative to fee simple title transfer.

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